United Nations COPUOS/T.433

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Unedited transcript

433rd Meeting
Monday, 2 June 1997, 3 p.m.
Vienna

Chairman: Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria)
later: Mr. RAO (India)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Opening of the session

The CHAIRMAN: I know declare open the fortieth anniversary session, and the 433rd meeting, of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

Adoption of the agenda

The CHAIRMAN: You have before you, for your approval and adoption, the Provisional Agenda for the session (document A/AC.105/L.212). If I hear no objection, I consider that this agenda is adopted.

It is so decided.

Election of officers

The CHAIRMAN: At the 1996 session of COPUOS, on the basis of our discussions on working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, I was entrusted with the ask of conducting inter-sessional informal consultations with Committee members, with the aim of presenting consensus decisions to this session of the Committee on the modalities of establishing a new composition of the Bureau, bearing in mind the principles of both equitable geographical representation and rotation. The Committee further recommended that all proposals made by delegations, including those concerning restructuring of the agenda and examination of the duration of the session, would be fully taken into account in the framework of those informal consultations.

In accordance with this mandate and with the assistance of the Secretariat and bureau members, I organized six meetings of such informal consultations (five were held in Vienna, and one in New York) between July 1996 and April 1997. As many of you are aware, these consultations were not always straightforward, as we started off with many differing views and proposals. I made the point at the beginning of the consultations that I was determined to reach an agreement on new working methods, as well as a new Bureau, so that I could step down at the opening of this session. And with the cooperation of Committee members, some of whom had to make extensive compromises, we were able to successfully conclude those consultations.

The results are twofold. The first concerns my package proposal on the working methods of the

In its resolution 50/27 of 16 February 1996, the General Assembly endorsed the recommendation of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space that, beginning with its thirty-ninth session, the Committee would be provided with unedited transcripts in lieu of verbatim records. This record contains the texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages as transcribed from taped recordings. The transcripts have not been edited or revised.

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week of the date of publication, to the Chief, Translation and Editorial Service, room D0708, United Nations Office at Vienna, P.O. Box 500, A-1400, Vienna, Austria. Corrections will be issued in a consolidated corrigendum.

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Committee and its subsidiary bodies, contained in document A/AC.105/L.213, which is now before the Committee and which sets out: the consensus text agreed upon concerning the composition of the Bureau of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies; agenda structures; and duration of sessions. As concerns agenda structures, you will recall that at its thirty-ninth session the Committee recommended that at its 1997 session, the Legal Subcommittee should continue its open-ended informal consultations with a view to coming up with a list of annotated items agreed upon by consensus that could be considered by the Committee at its fortieth session for possible inclusion in that Subcommittee's agenda.

At its 1997 session, the Legal Subcommittee recommended that a new agenda item, "Review of the status of the five international legal instruments on outer space" (contained in document A/AC.105/C.2/L.206/Rev.1), should be included in the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee as from its 1998 session.

At this point I would like to put on record that during the consultations, concerns were expressed that the process for reaching an agreement on the Committee's working methods would prejudge the substantive consideration by the Legal Subcommittee of a new item for its agenda. The Subcommittee continued its work on the selection of a new agenda item and recommended the adoption of the proposal to review the status of the five international legal instruments on outer space, and the package proposal recommended for adoption contains the decision reached by the Legal Subcommittee. The sixth informal consultation was held following this decision by the Subcommittee, and the package proposal which is now before you (document A/AC.105/L.213, Part A) was agreed by consensus at that time.

Having made this brief introduction to the package proposal, do I take it that the Committee is in a position to formally adopt the package proposal contained in Part A of document A/AC.105/L.213? If I hear no objections, this package proposal is adopted.

It is so decided. This package proposal as contained in Part A of document A/AC.105/L.213 will be annexed to the report of the Committee.

The second set of results of the informal consultations mentioned previously concern the composition of the Bureau of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies. At the sixth meeting of the informal consultations, we continued our discussions on possible candidates for the Bureau. After lengthy discussion among the Member States and regional groups concerned, it was agreed that the composition of the Bureau of the Committee for the first three-year term, beginning with the current session, would be as follows:

Chairman: Professor U.R. Rao (India)
First Vice-Chairman: Ambassador Raimundo Gonzalez (Chile)
Second Vice-Chairman/ Rapporteur: Professor Mouslim Kabbaj (Morocco)

It was agreed that the Chairman of the Committee for the second three-year term (i.e. starting in the year 2000) would be Ambassador Raimundo Gonzalez (Chile), and that the candidates for the other positions would be determined through consultations between the Asian and African Groups.

It was further agreed that the Chairmen of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee for the first three-year term, starting in 1998, would remain Professor Dietrich Rex (Germany) and Dr. Vaclav Mikulka (Czech Republic), respectively. The chairmanships of both Subcommittees will continue to be held for the second three-year period (i.e. as from 2001) by the Western European and Others Group and the Eastern European Group. All the above details and results of the discussions in the informal consultations can be found in Part B of document A/AC.105/L.213.

I have thus outlined the results of the intersessional informal consultations among members of the Committee with regard to the composition of the Bureau. If so agreed by the Committee, the package proposal and composition of the Bureau, as contained in Parts A and B of document A/AC.105/L.213, shall be annexed to the report of the Committee.

I see no objections. That being the case, may I propose to the Committee that Professor U.R. Rao (India), Ambassador Raimundo Gonzalez (Chile) and Professor Mouslim Kabbaj (Morocco) be elected as Chairman, First Vice-Chairman and Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur, respectively? I see no objections.

It is so decided. (*Applause*)

I congratulate Professor Rao, a senior member of the Committee, Ambassador Gonzalez, a veteran (if I may say so) in United Nations matters and specifically as

concerns outer space, and Professor Kabbaj, a very active participant in the more recent years of the Committee's work, on their election to the new Bureau. I will shortly invite the newly elected members of the Bureau to take their seats on the podium. Before doing so, I would like to state unequivocally that the Committee has just concluded a profound reform in the way of conducting its work.

As my last act as Chairman of this Committee, I would now like to make some very brief comments on the work of this Committee in the field of the peaceful uses of outer space during my tenure, and from the viewpoint of Austria, which has held the chairmanship of this Committee for the past 35 years.

It is with mixed feelings that I bid you farewell. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as Chairman; over the years I have been here, it has been my great pleasure to have come to know many of your personally.

Throughout its history, COPUOS has made vital contributions to the peaceful uses of outer space. It has promoted international cooperation and has successfully worked towards ensuring that all countries, particularly the developing countries, share the benefits of space applications. One of its crowning achievements is that it has created an entirely new body of international law to regulate space activities. However, the Committee has also had its share of frustration: lengthy and comparatively insignificant negotiations over somewhat parochial points of view have sometimes taken place. This is the nature of international relations, particularly when trying to reach consensus decisions; but the decisions reached are solid and long-lasting.

Although today I close the door on one phase of my direct involvement in the United Nations at the multilateral level, I will continue to follow United Nations affairs as part of my responsibilities in the Austrian Foreign Service. I am sure I speak on behalf of the Government of Austria in saying that it has been a great privilege and honour for Austria to hold the chairmanship of the Committee since its inception. Austria has always shown a great interest in the Committee's work, which has been clearly demonstrated by the calibre of its past Chairmen, among them Foreign Ministers and other high-ranking officials.

Since I joined the Committee in 1985, first as a delegate and than as its Chairman, I have been privileged to witness many significant events of international importance. When I first arrived, the negotiations on the Principles Relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Space were at an advanced stage. I had the satisfaction of playing a major role in finalizing them. Thereafter, in 1992 the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, negotiated under my chairmanship, were adopted. Last year, thanks to the untiring efforts of my good friend, Ambassador Raimundo González of Chile, the Declaration on Outer Space Benefits was recommended for adoption by the General Assembly. Finally, this year we celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty, the "magna carta" of outer space law.

In terms of scientific achievements of the Committee, the birth and development of the idea to establish regional centres for space science and technology education was a major achievement. To date, one centre has been established and agreements to create similar centres in other regions of the world have been reached. More recently, through its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, the Committee began a comprehensive examination of the complex issue of space debris.

Another major accomplishment of this Committee, unprecedented in many aspects, is the decision to convene UNISPACE III in Vienna in July 1999. This decision, which is to be finalized during this session, provides the foundation for a unique opportunity for the world community to meet to discuss matters of mutual concern in the peaceful uses of outer space. I am sure you will agree that your work towards this goal has been very rewarding and signifi-cant. Beyond the substantive benefits, your decisions on the organization of the Conference are innovative and take into consideration the current financial situation of the United Nations. Indeed, these innovations could serve a the model for future global conferences sponsored by the United Nations.

Over the years the Committee has taken significant and far-reaching steps to improve its working methods and effectiveness. Your decision to utilize unedited transcripts is a shining example of your efforts, and one which has been acknowledged by the entire United Nations system as a possible model to be followed in the future. Your efforts with regard to the organization of UNISPACE III fall into the same category.

Finally, the work carried out during the inter-sessional period is a truly remarkable accomplishment. You have revolutionized the way in which our business is conducted to more clearly reflect the current international situation. With all these innovations in its

working methods, the Committee, long recognized as a pioneer in many areas, will undoubtedly retain its reputation as a "trail blazer" for the entire United Nations system.

I have enjoyed being a part of all these developments which took place under my chairmanship. However, I am also mindful that the time has come for me to step down and hand over the reins to a new Chairman at a time when the Committee is being revitalized, and fresh impetus is being given to its working methods. I would be very remiss if, at this point, I did not applaud the tireless efforts of the Secretariat in working with the Committee in pursuit of its objectives, and for providing such innovative ideas for the Committee to discuss and agree upon. I would like to thank specifically the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs and his staff for all their work. I would also like to pay tribute to the Director-General, Giorgio Giacomelli, who has overseen and closely guided the work of the Secretariat. I have indeed been fortunate in getting to know many of you through the work of our Committee, and am happy to count many among you as my close friends. I look forward to continuing that friendship beyond my tenure in the Committee as we continue to work together on issues of international concern.

As I leave the Chair, I leave with a strong sense of accomplishment. I am certain that I am leaving you in good hands, and I have every confidence that the new Bureau will brightly lead the Committee into the next millennium. I thank you for all these wonderful memories, and I wish you every success in your future endeavours. (*Applause*)

I have been informed that the delegation of Japan has asked the floor, and I therefore give the floor to the distinguished representative of Japan.

Mr. Y. IKEDA (Japan): I felt I could not let this moment go without expressing my sincere appreciation to you for your outstanding contribution to the Committee's work since 1991.

Under your chairmanship, over the last six years the Committee has registered several major achievements. I would like to recall some of them. As concerns substantive matters, at its thirty-fifth session the Committee approved the text of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, which was then adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. After many years of negotiation, at its thirty-ninth session the Committee adopted the draft Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interests of all States, taking into particular account the Needs of Developing Countries. It was then approved by the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. Again at its thirty-ninth session, the Committee decided to convene a special session of COPUOS, which will be called UNISPACE III, open to all Member States of the United Nations, which will take place before the turn of the century.

Regarding organizational matters, in 1994 the membership of the Committee was enlarged from 53 to 61. As concerns the records of both the Committee and its Legal Subcommittee, as a cost-saving measure unedited transcripts were introduced to replace summary records. This was the first trial of this kind to be undertaken within the United Nations, and the General Assembly itself has followed the results of this trial in COPUOS with great interest.

The most prominent achievement under your chairmanship has been the conclusion of the series of inter-sessional informal consultations on the working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, which resulted in a consensus agreement. In the light of reforms within the United Nations as well as the new era which has emerged following the end of the cold war, we have begun to consider how to adjust the existing working methods of the Committee and its two Subcommittees in line with the new challenges which have arisen. The formulation of the Chairman's package proposal was obviously extremely difficult: you had to take into account the delicate balance of various interests of the Member States. Had it not been for your extraordinary leadership and experience, a consensus agreement would never have emerged from these complex consultations, which lasted for almost one full year.

It is hard for me to fully express my appreciation for all you have done, and this Committee has indeed been fortunate to have had you as its Chairman at this important juncture in its forty-year history. With the formal adoption of the Chairman's package proposal, we have turned a new page of COPUOS. The five offices within the bureau of the Committee and its Subcommittees will rotate among five regional groups, with three-year terms and the possibility of one re-election. A new item, "Review of the status of the five international legal instruments on outer space", has been added to the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee. A new pattern of meetings, comprising five-and-a-half weeks in total for the Committee and its Subcommittees, will be

introduced. While these new arrangements are being introduced, the principle of consensus remains.

As we are all aware, we have just established the principle of adopting new working methods. Our next objective is to apply the new principle in the most appropriate manner in order to realize the objectives of the reform exercise – that is, the adjustment and revitalization of the work of COPUOS and its subsidiary bodies to meet the new challenges which have arisen. COPUOS should continue to play a fundamental role in ensuring that the exploration and uses of outer space remain peaceful and make a valuable contribution to mankind: this is a prerequisite for our future work.

I would like to congratulate Professor Rao, Ambassador González and Professor Kabbaj on their election as the new members of the Bureau. It is my sincere hope as well as my firm belief that COPUOS will be guided as effectively as before under Professor Rao's chairmanship. COPUOS faces many challenges in the years ahead, chief among which is the holding of UNISPACE III before the turn of the century, as well as the multi-year work plan on space debris, which will be completed by 1999. My country, as a Member State of this Committee, will make every effort to support the Chairman and other members of the Bureau so that the Committee can continue to play its full role in United Nations activities in the field of the peaceful uses of outer space.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for your statement and the kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the United States.

Mr. K. HODGKINS (United States of America): On behalf of the United States delegation, it is my pleasure to congratulate Professor Rao, Ambassador González and Professor Kabbaj on their election to the Bureau. Each brings with them a wealth of experience in both space affairs and in multilateral diplomacy which will serve this Committee well as we enter a new phase of our work. Please be assured that the new Bureau has my delegation's full support in its efforts to promote, through COPUOS, international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

I would like to offer my delegation's sincerest thanks to you, Mr. Chairman, for the outstanding role you have played as our Chairman and as Austria's representative to COPUOS. Your personal dedication to this Committee has been an inspiration to us all and you leave a record of accomplishment which will be hard to match. With your permission I would like to highlight what my delegation considers to be your greatest accomplishments, both as Chairman, as Austrian representative, and as a mediator for several difficult issues before the Committee when you first joined us in 1985.

Almost single-handedly, you brought COPUOS back from the brink of disaster in 1985 and restored consensus and a sense of trust among the members of the Committee. Under your leadership, COPUOS adopted the Principles on remote sensing and nuclear power sources; we agreed on the Declaration on international space cooperation; the Committee and its Subcommittees added several new items to their agendas; and a working group of the whole was established on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82.

In addition, you introduced eight new Member States to our Committee. Under your leadership, we adopted a series of reform measures vastly improving our utilization of conference resources, and thus achieving a saving of $1.5 million per biennium. We have been able to expand the opportunities available to developing countries to benefit from space exploration, through the Space Applications Programme. In conjunction with COSPAR and the IAF, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee now holds seminars on specific themes. COPUOS has provided support to three meetings of the Space Conference of the Americas, and has also reached agreement to hold UNISPACE III.

You played a major role in achieving all these measures, and we greatly appreciate your efforts. This alone is an impressive list of achievements, which is all the more remarkable when during much of this time you also served as Permanent Representative to the United Nations and President of the Security Council. Ironically enough, the most fitting tribute to your unequalled dedication to this Committee is the package proposal, which ended your tenure as Chairman while at the same time leaving COPUOS well placed to meet the challenges of the future. The preparation of this package proposal was indeed a thankless task, but you completed it with the exceptional diplomatic skill and professionalism which have been your trademarks over the years.

In conclusion, I would like to add that it has been my personal pleasure to have worked with you over the past ten years, and also with Franz Cede, Hans Winkler, Helmut Freudenschuss and Helmut Bock, who have made enormous contributions to the success of this body.

Much has been accomplished and the future holds great promise for COPUOS, due in large part to the role played by our our colleagues from Austria.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the distinguished representative of the United States for his kind and moving words addressed to me. The next speaker is the distinguished representative of Sudan.

Mr. A. ABDEL HAKIM (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I would like to speak on behalf of both Sudan and of the African Group. Mohamed, the Prophet of Islam, said that those who do not address thanks to people do not address thanks to God. On this occasion, I wish to extend to you, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the African Group, our thanks and appreciation for your continuous contributions to this important Committee since you joined it as the representative of Austria in 1985, and assumed its leadership in 1991.

The accomplishments which have been listed by former speakers, as well as the achievements of COPUOS under your leadership, are a tribute to your remarkable personal characteristics, as well as your technical and diplomatic skills – your patience, perseverance and sincerity – which have characterized your work over the years. Previous speakers have already mentioned the accomplishments of COPUOS during this period, both as concerns substantive and organizational matters. The adoption of the sets of Principles and also the Declaration, which pays particular attention to the needs of the developing countries, are major achievements.

On the organizational side, the increase in the number of members of the Committee and your final accomplishments in the package proposal as concerns methods of work and the structure of the new Bureau, also represents very fair treatment of the developing countries. Whereas the Declaration does refer to the necessity of granting special attention to the needs of developing countries, the leadership of the Committee had always remained a monopoly held by other parties. However, the new structure, which has brought to the fore representatives of three groups from the developing countries, while retaining the participation of the other two groups, recognizes three issues. The first is that the organizational reforms are in keeping with the contents of the Declaration. Secondly, the developing countries are now accorded the opportunity to make a real contribution to the work of COPUOS. And lastly, the Committee will continue its work with the combined efforts of all its members.

Your achievements and the proposals which we approved today have rendered this Committee ever stronger and more capable to attain new heights in its future achievements. The greatest tribute we can pay to you is to comply with the new methods of work and to expand the scope of the peaceful uses of outer space. We offer you our sincerest thanks: many people step down from posts – and indeed depart from this life – and leave nothing behind. You have established many firm friendships among the members of the Committee and laid foundations for work which will remain everlasting. I would like to thank both you and the Republic of Austria, which introduced you to this Committee and has allowed you to donate your time to the service of COPUOS, and thus to the service of humanity.

In conclusion, I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to Professor Rao. I believe this Committee is very fortunate to have its leadership assumed by someone of his experience and excellence. I would also like to congratulate Ambassador González, who has made major contributions to our work, which I am sure he will continue to do, as well as Professor Kabbaj, whose energy and knowledge will ensure that the African continent has a worthy representative. May I also congratulate Professor Rex and Dr. Mikulka for their excellent continued efforts in the goals they are pursuing. The African Group will spare no effort or endeavour in assisting the new members of the Bureau in our important humanitarian work.

I would like to thank the members of the Committee for allowing the inter-sessional informal consultations to take place under your very able chairmanship; their results represent a considerable achievement.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your kind and moving words. The next speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of Morocco.

Mr. A. BENMOUSSA (Morocco) *(interpretation from French)*: Thank you. The tradition which has been adhered to in the United Nations system is to refrain from taking the floor when the chairman of a regional group has already done so – and done so in a most effective way! However, I have a small advantage over colleagues present here in COPUOS, and that is that I have known you for many, many years, dating back to the time when you were the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations. So I have had the opportunity to become very familiar with the quality of your work, always

excellent, from the time you were President of the Security Council.

I can bear witness to the fact that watching you work, I have seen people the world over hanging on your every word, and on your initiatives. I remember from this earlier period that as well as my solid friendship with you, I also had a very deep admiration for you.

Today, COPUOS is the order of the day, and on behalf of His Majesty the King of Morocco, I would like to offer a tribute and our gratitude to you: I say tribute, because all who have had the opportunity to meet and know you within COPUOS have been able to appreciate the high level of professionalism and leadership which you have demonstrated throughout both your period as Austrian representative in 1985, and in your tenure as Chairman since 1991. These qualities have helped guide the Committee through many difficult periods. You have certainly enriched multilateral diplomacy, no mean task, and have played a major role in many of the achievements of COPUOS, which the representatives of Japan and the United States have enumerated. And I say "gratitude", because it does not take a genius to recognize the fact that you have revolutionized COPUOS. You have organized and led six very difficult and intense rounds of negotiations in the informal consultations, resulting in radical modifications in our methods of work, and the achievement of a consensus concerning changes in membership of the Bureau. This has offered COPUOS a new institutional stability, without which it could have been in serious danger.

I would like to propose that your speech, which I found very moving, be circulated as an official document of the work of this Committee at its fortieth session. Knowing full well the deep qualities which you have always demonstrated, I must add that it is simply not possible to let you just go like this! We will have to devise a magic formula which will make it possible for you to continue to play an important role at this landmark conference which is on the horizon, UNISPACE III. We must all give this matter some serious consideration!

I could not close without also paying tribute to the Republic of Austria because it and you are inextricably linked: you have been the representative of Austria, and have made it possible for COPUOS to work under excellent conditions throughout the period of the cold war, when the Chair of the Committee was a tremendous problem. Austria deserves the gratitude of us all for steering our COPUOS ship through troubled waters. You have been able to ensure that we had this essential confidence and trust, so vital in multilateral forums. As the years pass, I am ever more convinced that without this trust, the United Nations system would simply crumble. You have established trust in this Committee, as you have done in other areas and as you will certainly continue to do wherever you go. History will remember your chairmanship as heralding the introduction of equitable geographic distribution, international equity, and democratization of an essential body in international cooperation.

On behalf of my Government, I would like to express from the bottom of my heart our gratitude and our hope that you will continue to participate in and follow the work of COPUOS.

Before concluding, I would be remiss if I did not thank most warmly all the members of the Bureau and the Secretariat, and in particular Mr. Giorgio Giacomelli, who has been catalytic in so many of our efforts.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the distinguished representative of Morocco for his kind words addressed to the Director-General, to myself and to my country. The next speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of Chile.

Mr. R. GONZALEZ (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is particularly unfortunate for my delegation to be losing such a friend, because the friend we first met in 1985 led us to a new atmosphere of cooperation in our work. This in turn has led to concrete successes in the United Nations in the area of outer space.

In 1985, I remember clearly an occasion when I had the privilege of having lunch with you at the Chilean mission in New York. At the time I was a modest counsellor; now I am a modest ambassador. I recall your efforts to revitalize not only the subject which we were discussing, Earth observation by satellite – which was of major importance for developing countries – but COPUOS as a whole. Countless efforts were made: we were witnesses of the extensive discussions at the Austrian mission to the United Nations, and after lengthy and sustained negotiations we reached a conclusion, a document which has not been truly appreciated to this day. Not only did we overcome the crisis situation which obtained at that time, but we actually made significant progress. Your ability as a negotiator played and extremely vital role.

A few years later, you became Chairman of this Committee. As the years marched on, I had an opportunity to work very closely with both yourself and the Austrian delegation. We were able to resolve an

important issue in international relations when we adopted, by consensus, the Principles relating to cooperation in space. We modestly refer to this as the beginning of the access of all States to the benefits of space activities, without taking into account their levels of scientific advancement. Your abilities as a negotiator were an example to follow: you taught me so much. Here I would mention another "self-criticism": even within the United Nations, where one would expect to find people with the most appropriate intellectual training in such matters, as well as those in our own countries, this achievement has not been truly appreciated. The significance of bringing technology – observation, meteorology, etc. – closer to those who, on a daily basis, face problems of economic and social development, is a truly major achievement. You have sown the seeds of sustained scientific and legal progress in the future, which is vital, and it helps those of us who are continuing in the Committee to assume the heavy burden of the work which lies ahead. We will do our utmost to see that the solid basis which has now been established will gradually materialize into realities, and will lead to improve-ments in the social development of all peoples. Following the end of the cold war, to ensure an improvement in the living conditions of people has to be our main task.

Over the years there have been differences of opinion within the Committee, but they were always frank and were discussed openly. These discrepancies often enriched our debates and helped us to arrive at agreements. COPUOS has reached a critical juncture; we are stepping out on a new path, safe in the knowledge that we have this sound base, and I express my heartfelt gratitude to you for making that possible.

My delegation would like to propose that one paragraph of our report on this session should express the very deep gratitude of COPUOS for your specific contribution to the development of international space cooperation. If we have the capacity to internalize this, we, the developing countries, will be the first to benefit from such cooperation.

I would like to add a few words on my own election as First Vice-Chairman. What you have already achieved as Chairman is very significant; the package proposal before us speaks for itself. You led us through the inter-sessional informal consultations, where sometimes very different points of view were expressed, but we reached a successful conclusion in a relatively short time. On a personal note, I would like to thank colleagues from the Latin American countries for their support for me, which meant a lot to me. The contribution of the Group of 77 was equally important. If I may mention a few individuals: the Chairman of the Latin American Group (the distinguished Ambassador of Bolivia); the Chairman of the Group of 77; my thanks go to Spain, with whom Chile has very special links of solidarity, and where we look forward to very fruitful cooperation in the future; and also the support extended to me by the United States delegation.

I would like to congratulate Professor Rao; I had the honour and privilege to first meet him in 1982, when he chaired a working group within the framework of UNISPACE 82, held in Vienna. This was a conference which, as with any major event of this nature, had its pluses and minuses. Finally it brought together a working group whose mandate was to examine the degree of implementation of UNISPACE 82, and we began to talk about a third UNISPACE conference. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to the distinguished Rapporteur from Morocco, Professor Kabbaj. I would like to congratulate our predecessors in these posts, the Vice-Chairman from Romania, and the impeccable work done by the Rapporteur, from Brazil, who plays a significant role in this type of meeting. We have always benefited from a report on events which was up to date, rigorous and accurate.

In conclusion, I would like to outline you how we see the vice-chairmanship. Firstly, it goes without saying that it means complete loyalty and full cooperation with the Chairman, Professor Rao. Our interest is to exercise a very active involvement in assisting in all the areas within our terms of reference. We do not wish to be passive, as this is neither consistent with the mandate of the Committee nor a very responsible attitude to take. From now on, we hope it will be possible to finalize and put in motion some of our pending work. The dynamics of international relations mean that certain topics reach a stage where they tend to get stuck; it should be possible for us to make a qualitative leap forward in international relations, the principles of which are already established thanks to the work of our earlier meetings.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank my very dear friend, Ambassador González, who was just elected First Vice-Chairman of this Committee. The next speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. E. ZVEDRE (Russian Federation) *(interpretation from Russian)*: On behalf of the Russian delegation, I would like to welcome the new members of the Bureau and congratulate them all, especially

Professor Rao, on their election to these important posts. Under the new leadership, my delegation hopes that COPUOS will maintain its position as the major authority in the area of the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space, and will achieve ever more convincing and innovative results.

My delegation knows Professor Rao very well, and admires his qualities as an eminent scientist and excellent leader who has done much to advance the work of the Committee. He has also worked towards achieving broad-based bilateral relations between India and Russia in the field of space. We therefore extend our very best wishes to him on the complex task which lies before him.

My delegation would also like to pay tribute to you for having led this Committee so successfully over the past few years. Many of our achievements during this period have been due in large part to your experience and guidance, and have been enumerated by previous speakers. It was precisely on your initiative and under your leadership that the inter-sessional informal consultations took place, resulting in a consensus decision on the new arrangements concerning the work of the Committee. All your efforts, your wisdom and your diplomatic skills have been greatly appreciated by us all, and we offer you our very best wishes in your future work.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for your very kind words addressed to me and to the new members of the Bureau. The next speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of the Ukraine.

Mr. KUZNETSOV (Ukraine) *(interpretation from Russian)*: My delegation would like to congratulate Professor Rao, Ambassador González and Professor Kabbaj upon their election to these eminent posts in our Committee.

Today is not an ordinary day: as previous speakers have already mentioned, your unique style and wealth of experience has greatly influenced this Committee, which you have led so well. Austria gave us an extremely eminent diplomat when they appointed you to this Committee many years ago. You have enjoyed such high renown in the international community for so long that paying tribute to you comes very easily and today we acknowledge your total professionalism and superb organizational skills which have benefited our work over the years. We have achieved significant results because you have guided the Committee in a constructive and diplomatic manner. You have laid the foundations for the success of our work as we approach the new millennium, and your knowledge has provided us with invaluable assistance as we begin our preparations for UNISPACE III.

On behalf of the Ukrainian delegation, I wish to express again our deep gratitude and pay tribute to all your excellent work over the years. The Ukrainian national space organization, Yuri ....., an important specialist in our country, has attributed to you the award of Yuri .....kov, and I would like to extend this award to you under somewhat less official circumstances in two hours' time.

The Ukrainian delegation wishes you all the best in your future activities.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your statement, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you in advance for the high distinction you announced which will be given to me, and which I will be most grateful and honoured to receive. The next speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of Greece.

Ms. H. MICHALOPOULOU (Greece): I wish to express mz delegation's appreciation to you for your outstanding contribution to the effective promotion of the work of COPUOS for so many years, including the recent achievement of reaching a delicate consensus on the issue of the working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies. I would also like to extend our warmest congratulations to the newly elected Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the Committee, and wish them every success in their endeavours.

My delegation takes this opportunity to reiterate Greece's firm intention to continue not only to actively participate in the work and activities of COPUOS, but also to contribute to further improvement of its organization and functioning as well the promotion and strengthening of its role in the future.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your kind words addressed to myself and to the new members of the Bureau. The next speaker is the distinguished representative of India.

Mr. Y. TIWARI (India): On behalf of both the Asian Group and of India, I would like to express our deep appreciation and gratitude to you for the outstanding leadership you have given this Committee over the past six years.

COPUOS has made great progress in several directions under your chairmanship: the adoption of the

Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space; the Declaration on Outer Space Benefits; the introduction of space debris to the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee; the expansion of the Committee's membership; the package proposal on working methods; and the decision to convene of UNISPACE III are but a few examples of how you have demonstrated your vast experience, negotiating skills, and your determination to succeed notwithstanding the complex nature of these topics.

You have made sincere and major efforts to continue two vital traditions of the Committee: the commitment to the principle of consensus, and the spirit of cooperation and compromise. At the same time, in line with changes at the international level, you encouraged the discussion of new ideas which have manifested themselves in improving the efficiency of COPUOS and its Subcommittees. We have already seen the fruits of your work to some extent; the future promises further positive results. The Asian Group wishes you every success in the future, and a long and enriched professional and personal life.

I would like to pay tribute to the past Vice-Chairmen, Mr. Mazilu (Romania) and Rapporteur, Mr. Ribeiro (Brazil), for their excellent contributions to the Committee. Special thanks also go to the Government of Austria for its continuing support for the deliberations of this Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your kind words addressed to me. The next speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of Romania.

Mr. M. PISO (Romania): The Romanian delegation offers its sincere congratulations to the new members of the Bureau, Professor Rao, Ambassador González and Professor Kabbaj. We feel sure that the Committee will successfully continue its efforts to improve international cooperation in the global use of outer space under their guidance.

My delegation expresses its highest consideration to you, Mr. Chairman, for your efficient and objective chairmanship. Among your main achievements as Chairman of the Committee, apart from those already cited by previous speakers, I would like to draw attention to the following. The Committee has maintained and developed the principle of consensus in taking decisions during your chairmanship, which is the most effective tool for future coordination of space programmes. We thank you for your exceptional work, and wish you every success in the future.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your kind words addressed to me. The next speaker is the distinguished representative of Turkey.

Mr. O. SÖLENDIL (Turkey): I wish to join with those previous speakers in expressing my delegation's deep appreciation and gratitude for your contributions to this Committee. We wish you all the best in the future; we hope you will continue to be involved in our work, and we are sure that the new members of the Bureau will carry on from where you left off, as it were. My delegation will continue to support and assist the new Bureau as it has in the past.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your kind words addressed to me and to the newly elected Bureau. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Brazil.

Mr. A. DE OURO-PRETO (Brazil): My delegation wishes to congratulate you on your very able chairmanship of this Committee. We have all benefited from your great experience, skill and ability. Under your leadership, COPUOS has made significant progress, and during this time you worked closely with a fellow Brazilian, Mr. Edgard Ribeiro, as Rapporteur. There has always been a smooth and cooperative relationship between the two of you, and Mr. Ribeiro has asked me to offer you his sincere personal congratulations.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your kind words and also in this context, I thank my dear friend Edgard Ribeiro.

We have had a long list of speakers; I think this is the moment for me to thank you again for all the very kind words which I do not deserve. I wish the new members of the Bureau every success in their future work, and all the happiness that I felt in guiding this Committee. I now invite the new members of the Bureau to take their seats on the podium. (*Applause*)

Mr. U. Rao (India), Chairman, took the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: It is a great honour for me to have been elected the new Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to you all for having entrusted me with this important position. I assure you of my firm commitment to the work of this Committee and my dedication to its continuing success in the promotion of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

The Committee has made historic contributions towards the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space, made possible because of its strong devotion and commitment to the spirit of mutual cooperation, consensus and compromise. I sincerely hope that with your support, cooperation and guidance, we will continue to build upon our past traditions and strive to achieve the dream and vision of realizing a truly global village – not just in the technical sense, which we have already achieved, but in the real sense, where all nations on this planet will benefit from the application of space technology.

With spectacular advances in technology, many new applications have unfolded in the peaceful uses of outer space. Consequently, the challenges of promoting international cooperation and further consolidating the work of this Committee are also becoming greater. I firmly believe that we can achieve greater heights in the promotion of promotion of international cooperation through our collective efforts.

I would like to offer my congratulations to Ambassador Raimundo González of Chile on his election as First Vice-Chairman of the Committee, and to Professor Mouslim Kabbaj of Morocco on his election as Second Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur. I am indeed privileged to take up the work of this new Bureau with two such distinguished colleagues, whose wealth of experience in the Committee is of great significance. I would also like to congratulate Professor Dietrich Rex of Germany and Dr. Vaclav Mikulka of the Czech Republic on their election as Chairmen of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee, respectively. I look forward to working closely with all my colleagues to ensure that the Committee and its Subcommittees successfully fulfil their mandated tasks.

I am sure you will join me in expressing deep appreciation for the significant contributions made by our illustrious predecessors in the Bureau from Austria, Romania and Brazil, in their respective roles of Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Committee. Their commitment and dedication to the Committee's work has enabled it to make significant and long-lasting achievements. With the adoption of five international treaties, five sets of legal principles governing space activities, and the holding of two major United Nations conferences on space activities, this Committee has created an enviable record as one of the most successful bodies in the United Nations. Without the efforts of our distinguished predecessors in the Bureau, it would not have been possible to take pro-active decisions, by consensus, on the promotion of international cooperation in outer space.

We owe special thanks to the outgoing Chairman, Ambassador Peter Hohenfellner, for his outstanding contributions over the last six years, and in particular his efforts in guiding the Committee through some difficult negotiations over the past few months. Shortly before the opening of this meeting, I had a brief talk with him and I could witness his deep dedication and belief in the principles of the United Nations, and his commitment to improve international cooperation. I feel that we already miss him, but I hope he will continue to work with us in another capacity.

The Committee also owes much to the outgoing Vice-Chairman, Ambassador Dimitru Mazilu, and the Rapporteur, Mr. Edgard Telles Ribeiro, for their dedicated services. At this point I would like to acknowledge the significant contributions made to this Committee by the Government of Austria. Throughout the history of COPUOS, Austria has provided immeasurable support to its work and has contributed greatly to its success.

Again I thank you for electing me as the new Chairman of the Committee, and I hope I can live up to the trust and confidence you have placed in me.

Before we move on to the next item on the agenda, as my first official act as Chairman of the Committee, it is my pleasure to welcome the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, Mr. Giorgio Giacomelli, who will make an opening statement. I now give the floor to the Director-General.

Mr. G. GIACOMELLI (Director-General, United Nations Office at Vienna): I would like to welcome you all to Vienna, and to express to Ambassador Hohenfellner the great appreciation and gratitude of the Secretariat for the extraordinary work he has performed in leading this Committee. I would also like to thank the Government of Austria for their constant support to the Committee for so many years. I join with all of you in congratulating Professor Rao, Ambassador González and Professor Kabbaj on their election to the new Bureau, and wish them every success in the challenge which faces them.

I do have a nicely prepared speech in front of me! But in the spirit of saving precious time, I would prefer to say a few impromptu words. This Committee, with its excellent record, which has carried out its significant and substantive work for some decades, must now feel

gratified by a sense of fulfilment at the successful conclusion of a period of important work, let alone that which which lies ahead. Even in the difficult times of the cold war, COPUOS managed to reach consensus and make progress in a completely new area.

Outer space, originally linked only with the world of science fiction, has gradually developed into the most significant challenge to humanity, offering new vistas and perspectives of progress. It has also provided an element conducive to what is almost forced integration of the whole of humanity. COPUOS has been most innovative, and only recently has reviewed its working methods, taken a leading role, and commanded recognition from Member States in the General Assembly for its readiness to adapt to changing requirements, and to adopt new system which are already being copied by other bodies.

This is a difficult period of time – no less challenging, however. Ahead of the Committee lies the prospect of making this arm of the United Nations a key element in the context of progress and sustainable development. Throughout its existence, COPUOS has been greatly concerned with securing a structured development of what we might ambitiously call the "conquest" of space, while at the same time ensuring that the progress made is of benefit to all.

The technological application of outer space is a key factor in economic and social development, and provides the main vehicle for the major revolution of our times, the communications revolution. This area will undoubtedly grow and will be one of the greatest challenges of this era. Another challenge is the preparation of the third conference on outer space, UNISPACE III, which you decided to organize as a special session of this Committee. Again, this demonstrates the spirit of innovation which persists within COPUOS. UNISPACE III will be a tremendous landmark as concerns the significance and role of COPUOS within the ambit of the United Nations, which is indispensable not only as a meeting point, but as one of the key factors in the role of the new United Nations: to find the true *raison d'etre* of its being.

I will spare you further words, which would only reiterate what has already been stated most eloquently by so many of you, and close by giving you my best wishes for your deliberations here in Vienna.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to thank the Director-General for his encouraging words to the Committee, in which he has highlighted some of its most important issues. I am sure the Committee is ready to meet these challenges which lie ahead.

Attendance by non-Members of the Committee

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to inform the Committee that I have received *notes verbales* from Angola, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Cuba, Holy See, Luxembourg, Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Tunisia and the League of Arab States, in which they request permission to attend the current session of COPUOS as observers. I therefore propose that, in conformity with past practice, we invite those delegations to attend the current session and to address the Committee as appropriate. This is of course without prejudice to further requests of this nature, and does not involve any decision by the Committee concerning status: it is a courtesy we customarily extend to delegations.

If I hear no objection, we shall proceed accordingly. *It is so decided.*

Before moving on to the next agenda item, I now give the floor to Professor Kabbaj.

Mr. M. KABBAJ (Rapporteur): It is an honour and a pleasure for me to thank the Committee for my election. The new Bureau brings Asia, Latin America and Africa to the forefront in the field of the peaceful uses of outer space within the United Nations.

(continues in French) Delegations which initiated the debate on democracy in COPUOS can see today that those ideas have turned into concrete reality. I would like to pay tribute to Mr. Hohenfellner, who has presided over the deliberations towards this democratization through equitable representation of all geographic regions. As you know, the utilization of space is of great interest to Africa, particularly as regards spin-off effects, as mentioned by the Ambassador of Sudan; these are necessary for sustainable development, for food security, and to combat poverty, desertification and other scourges. As a result of scientific and intellectual curiosity, the people of Africa are very interested in space observation, astronomy, and other areas which our work in this Committee addresses.

Today, we must all cooperate and be more aware within the international community itself. UNISPACE III will represent the crowning of our achievements, and an extremely important milestone. I would like to assure Professor Rao and Ambassador González that I will fully apply myself to this very crucial area of international

cooperation in order to enhance universal knowledge for the well-being of humanity.

The CHAIRMAN: We will now move on to the next agenda item.

Statement by the Chairman

The CHAIRMAN: Today marks the beginning of a new period in the history of this Committee. While maintaining the principle of decision-making by consensus, in a comparatively short period of time the Committee has succeeded in carrying out a fundamental reform in its working methods since its establishment over three decades ago. This remarkable achievement is the result of our great commitment to overcome political difficulties and face challenges in promoting international cooperation in the ever-expanding areas of space exploration and exploitation.

The fundamental reform we have just witnessed has only been possible because Member States of the Committee recognized the need for such reform, in view of the major political and economic changes at the international level that have taken place over recent years. The Committee accomplished its task because it concentrated on optimizing and further enriching its functions to better serve the international community. This proves that it is possible to work effectively, through cooperation and compromise, to reach consensus among all members of the Committee even on the most complex political issues.

I would like to review the major events in outer space during the past year, as well as the highlights of work to be carried out by the Committee at this session. Before doing so, on behalf of the Committee I wish to thank the Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, Professor Dietrich Rex of Germany, who has guided the work of the Subcommittee with his great knowledge of space science and technology and in particular his experience in the field of space debris. I also wish to thank the Chairman of the Legal Subcommittee, Dr. Vaclav Mikulka of the Czech Republic, whose vast knowledge and experience of complex legal issues has greatly benefited the Subcommittee. My warmest congratulations go to Professor Vladimir Kopal of the Czech Republic for his excellent work as temporary Chairman of the Legal Subcommittee during Mr. Mikulka's absence.

Let me briefly highlight the major achievements in outer space over the past year which have a direct bearing on the work of this Committee. We can indeed be proud that on 4 October this year, we will celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the historic launching of "Sputnik", which dramatically ushered us into the space age. The spectacular achievements of the last four decades of space exploration have not only enabled us to go back to the beginning of time and reach the very end of the universe, but have also effectively diminished both time and distance, turning this beautiful planet of ours into a global village. The vast and endless benefits of space technology already extend to the field of communication, meteorology, TV broadcasting, education, agriculture, industrial growth, resource management, environmental protection, disaster mitigation, flood and drought management, health care and entertainment – touching virtually every aspect of human endeavour and making space exploration an integral part of daily life.

In the area of manned space flight, the Russian Federation maintained its occupation of its Mir Space Station by rotating crews, which have included astronauts of other countries. The German astronaut Reinhold Ewald spent 18 days on Mir, and Claudie André-Deshays of France spent two weeks there. Following Shannon Lucis, who spent 188 days in space (a new record for long-duration space flight for a woman), United States astronauts John Blaha and Jerry Linenger stayed on board Mir in rotation. On 29 April 1997, Linenger and Tsibliev performed the first joint astronaut-cosmonaut space walk, and worked around the Mir station for nearly five hours retrieving space debris detectors and micro meteors, and installing new equipment on the station's surface. Regular visits to orbital stations are important not only for periodic supply of provisions and the collection of scientific data for return to Earth, but also in order to provide information on long-duration flights which will help in the operation of future international space stations. Such joint efforts by American and Russian technicians also help to overcome both technical and cultural barriers.

As well as the Atlantis flights to Mir, other United States space shuttle missions have also made significant contributions to international space research. Canadian mission specialist Marc Garneau performed technological experiments during the STS 77 flight of Endeavour. During the STS 75 flight of Columbia, Canadian and French payload specialists Robert Trisk and Jean-Jacques Favier, took part in the long-duration flight of Columbia, carrying a complex space lab life and microgravity sciences laboratory.

Another examples of international cooperation is the operation of the Advanced Earth Observing Satellite

(ADEOS), the first of the new generation of environmental satellites successfully launched by the Japanese H-II launcher on 17 August 1996. It contains eight main instruments, contributed by Japan, France and the United States, for carrying out important marine, land and coastal observations with six additional sensors for monitoring ocean weather, atmospheric ozone and greenhouse gases. Incorporation of inter-orbit relay technology in ADEOS will provide the necessary experience towards establishing a global observation system.

Among the developing countries, India has gained vast experience particularly in the use of remote sensing technology. At present India has a constellation of four remote sensing satellites, the latest being IRS P3, launched by India's own PSLV launch vehicle in 1996. IRS P3 carries on board a Modular Opto Electronic Scanner designed and built by the German Space Agency, in addition to the payloads built by India for remote sensing and X-ray astronomy studies. By means of an agreement with EOSAT of the United States, IRS data is now available to the international community on a real time basis. China and Brazil have also made considerable progress in the development of their joint remote sensing satellite C-BERS.

There have been several new launches of small and micro satellites, some of which were designed and developed at universities. An experimental communications micro satellite, Unamsat-2, is a product of research undertaken at the Autonomous University of Mexico. Musat-1 is being used to demonstrate low-cost technologies for the Aeronautical University at Cordoba, Argentina. Both were launched by Russian launchers as piggybacks to larger satellites. The first Spanish-built mini satellite was successfully launched on 21 April by the Orbital Sciences Corporation's Pegasus XL launcher, which was carried into airspace over the Canary Islands by an L-1011 aircraft, which represented the first airborne satellite launch outside the territory of the United States. The Spanish 195 kg MINISAT-01 is designed to perform several scientific missions, including the study of extreme ultraviolet background radiation, the behaviour of liquid bridges under microgravity conditions, and the investigation of low-energy gamma radiation.

In the field of satellite communications, a number of new geostationary telecommunication satellites have been launched for Argentina, Canada, China, France, India, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Russian Federation, Thailand, Turkey, United States, and several regional and international organizations including Arabsat, Inmarsat and Intelsat. Spectacular developments in digital compression technology, multiple access protocols, modulation techniques and the convergence of powerful computers with satellite communications have already heralded the age of the information superhighway, allowing everyone on this planet to have instantaneous access to audio, video, voice, data and message information through multi-media services. Digital audio broadcasting, direct-to-home television, personal mobile communication and broad-band ISDN services are already on the horizon, which will lead to the establishment of a global information infrastructure. It is encouraging to see that more and more developing countries now appreciate the importance of participating in the information revolution, and are using advanced communication technologies for the development of their national economies.

I would like to conclude this overview by some remarks on satellite navigation. The cost of receivers for the Global Positioning System (GPS) has fallen dramatically in recent years from tens of thousands to a few hundred dollars. This trend appears to be continuing, which allows new GPS-related services to be directed to ordinary customers rather than just a restricted number of airlines and transportation companies who could afford to invest large amounts of money. With this ability to obtain position determination with an accuracy of one to three meters in real time, it is now possible for farmers to use the GPS navigation system for "precision farming", using appropriate local adjustments in nutrient levels, seeding pattern and crop density to maximize the yield.

These developments, in particular the increasing efforts at international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, clearly indicate that countries the world over now realize that cooperation among States and international organizations is a desirable and cost-effective way to conduct space activities. I am convinced that the work of COPUOS will continue to make a significant contribution to such cooperative efforts.

The provisional agenda which we have just adopted is self-explanatory. I will therefore concentrate on those topics to which the Committee should devote particular attention in order to progress and to provide guidance to its Subcommittees. In the first place, I would like to review the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee; the report of its thirty-fourth session is contained in document A/AC.105/672.

The Subcommittee continued its joint consideration of the agenda items on the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, and the imple-

mentation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 on a priority basis. The Expert on Space Applications made a report on the progress in the activities for 1997, and the Subcommittee approved the programme for 1998 as presented by the Expert. The report gives details of progress made in the establishment of regional centres for space science and technology education. I am pleased to note that following the creation of the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific, which began its second education programme in January 1997; centres in Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa will shortly become operational.

While the Programme on Space Applications continues to play a leading role in international efforts towards the development of regional indigenous capabilities, I am pleased to note the increasing interest among Member States in holding international and regional seminars and workshops on space applications, some of which are also organized under the auspices of the Programme. I would like to stress that the Programme on Space Applications plays a crucial role not only in implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE 82, contributing to the development of the indigenous capability of developing countries and the promotion of regional cooperation in space applications, but also in building a solid base for the success of UNISPACE III. In this context I would like to reiterate the appeal made to Member States by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to support the Programme through voluntary contributions.

During the Subcommittee's 1997 session, the Working Group of the Whole was reconvened to evaluate the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82. It was requested by the Subcommittee to carry out the tasks entrusted to the Advisory Committee by the General Assembly. The Chairman of the Working Group of the Whole, Mr. Muhammed Nasim Shah of Pakistan, deserves our warm congratulations for his assiduous and untiring efforts to promote consensus and for the progress achieved, particularly as concerns essential issues relating to the preparations for UNISPACE III.

The Working Group held a number of lengthy informal consultations and in particular held intensive discussions concerning the agenda for the Conference. It had before it a report by the Secretariat on matters relating to the planning of the special session of the Committee (UNISPACE III), and working papers submitted by the United Kingdom (on behalf of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United States) and the Group of 77. Several Member States made substantial contributions to this important work; based on its deliberations, the Working Group made recommendations concerning the objectives, form, venue, date, participation, provisional annotated agenda, financial aspects and additional components of UNISPACE III, thus fulfilling the task entrusted to it by the Advisory Committee. The report of the Working Group is contained in Annex II of the Subcommittee's report.

COPUOS is mandated by the General Assembly to perform the function of the Preparatory Committee and to report to the fifty-second session of the Assembly on progress made in the preparations for UNISPACE III. In adopting the report of the Working Group, the Advisory Committee noted that it provided the basis for the Preparatory Committee to carry out the task entrusted to it by the General Assembly. In this connection we must bear in mind additional recommendations put forward by the Advisory Committee, for example concerning the meeting pattern of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies in 1999. Several United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations – namely COSPAR, IAF and ISPRS – have already expressed their willingness to assist in preparations for UNISPACE III.

When I was head of the Indian delegation some five years ago, I put forward a proposal to hold a third United Nations conference on the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space, to be hosted in Bangalore, India. I am delighted to see the concept which I originally developed materialize in a concrete form. It is all the more rewarding for me to serve as your Chairman at this crucial moment, when the Committee is requested to fulfil its important mandate as the Preparatory Committee for UNISPACE III. During the present session, I sincerely hope we will make further progress in these preparations, based on past developments and recent achievements, thus carrying space activities and their benefits forward into the new millennium.

I invite all delegates to contribute to the consideration of this matter, which I propose we discuss under agenda item 7, "Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee".

The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee made further progress on the issue of space debris, which was considered on a priority basis. The Subcommittee's work was conducted in accordance with the multi-year work plan, adopted at the 1995 session to consider specific items during the period 1996-1998. Several experts in the field made useful contributions, resulting in a technical

report which focused on on modelling the space debris environment and risk assessment. The Subcommittee took note of technical changes and amendments to its technical report for 1996, which concentrated on the measurement of space debris. It agreed that any changes or updates to its technical report would be made at the next session, culminating in the finalization of the report on space debris in 1999. A section on mitigation measures would be added to the report in 1998, and the Subcommittee requested Member States to provide relevant information to its Chairman in advance in order for the inter-sessional drafting work to be suitably organized.

The potential threat of space debris to present and future space activities is now widely recognized, and the international community of scientists have voiced their growing concern over the lack of international regulations in various international space forums to mitigate the effects of space debris. The international community has yet to take concrete action in this respect, which requires a thorough understanding of the complex nature of space debris, the cost-effectiveness and cost-performance of possible mitigation measures, and recognition of the benefits to be gained by implementing such measures. At the same time, the interrelated interests of both space-faring and non-space-faring nations must be borne in mind. Work undertaken in the Scientific and Technical Committee will help establish a global understanding of this complex issue, thus allowing the Committee to take the necessary action to lead international efforts in formulating suitable measures.

Nuclear power sources in outer space was also discussed on a priority basis by the Subcommittee, and the Working Group on this item was reconvened under the chairmanship of Professor Rex of Germany, Chairman of the Subcommittee. The Working Group agreed that technical experts, including those from the International Atomic Energy Agency, should be invited to attend its 1998 session in order to identify and study current international technical standards applicable to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space.

At this year's session, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee devoted special attention to discussion of "Space systems for direct broadcasting and global information systems for space research". At its 1998 session, the Subcommittee recommended that the item "Scientific and technical aspects and applications of space-based meteorology" should be the focus of special attention, for consideration within the context of UNISPACE III. The Subcommittee recommended to COPUOS that the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) and the International Astronautical Federation (IAF), in liaison with Member States, be invited to arrange a symposium to complement discussion of this subject. I am pleased to note the interest of both COSPAR and the IAF in contributing towards work in preparation for UNISPACE III and look forward to such continuing cooperation.

Turning to the work of the Legal Subcommittee, delegates will recall that the Subcommittee made significant contributions in 1996 to further developing an international regime governing space activities. Based on the work carried out and a subsequent recommendation by the Subcommittee, the General Assembly adopted the "Declaration on international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for the benefit and in the interest of all States, taking into account the needs of developing countries". The report of the Subcommittee on its thirty-sixth session and progress made in its work is contained in docu-ment A/AC.105/674.

As concerns the agenda item on the definition and delimitation of outer space and the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, the Working Group was reconvened under the very able chairmanship of Mr. Gabriel Maffei (Argentina). The Working Group divided its work into two parts. Regarding the first part – the definition and delimitation of outer space – it examined replies from Member States to the questionnaire on possible legal issues in connection with aerospace objects, and a note by the Secretariat on results obtained from a comprehensive analysis of those replied.

With respect to the geostationary orbit, the Subcommittee had before it a working paper prepared by the Secretariat in cooperation with the secretariat of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in response to the Working Group's request at the 1996 session of the Subcommittee. This working paper contained an analysis of the compatibility of the approach outlined in the working paper submitted by Colombia to the 1996 session with ITU's existing rules and procedures on the use of the geostationary orbit. Germany had submitted a new working paper at the 1996 session, which was revised twice at this year's session; the latest revision of the paper contains a draft resolution entitled "Request to the International Telecommunication Union and its Member States: Ensuring equitable access to the geostationary satellite orbit/radio frequency spectrum resources" (annexed to the Subcommittee's report). This Committee may wish to review the working paper submitted by Germany as well as other working papers, which might lead to the

adoption of a resolution and agreement on future consideration of this question in the Subcommittee.

Following a recommendation of the 1996 session of COPUOS, the Subcommittee continued its informal consultations with a view to drawing up an annotated list of items that could be considered by this Committee at the present session for inclusion in agenda of the Subcommittee. Following these discussion, the Subcommittee agreed to recommend that a new agenda item, "Review of the status of the five international treaties governing outer space", as contained in a working paper submitted by Mexico, be included in its agenda starting with its 1998 session. The Subcommittee also recommended that further informal consultations on possible new agenda items should continue at its next session.

In its resolution 51/123, the General Assembly stressed the importance of the widest possible adherence to international treaties that promote the peaceful uses of outer space, and invited States not yet parties to such international treaties to give serious consideration to ratifying or acceding to them. This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty, which entered into force on 10 October 1967, and which forms the foundation for other treaties and legal principles governing space activities. Therefore it would seem an opportune moment to recommend inclusion of the agenda item "Review of the status of the five international treaties governing outer space" in the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee.

At the thirty-sixth session of the Legal Subcommittee, the International Institute of Space Law (IISL) and the European Centre for Space Law (ECSL) organized a symposium entitled "Celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty". On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank both IISL and ECSL for their contribution to the work of the Subcommittee by stimulating discussions relating to its past achievements, present responsibility and future tasks. The Subcommittee agreed that at its 1998 session, IISL and ECSL be invited to hold a symposium on space law.

This concludes my review of the highlights of the work of the two Subcommittees. I hope we will have fruitful discussions in the Committee at this session and will be able to provide guidance for the future work of both Subcommittees.

As concerns other agenda items, the General Assembly has requested the Committee to consider on a priority basis the ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, as well as to consider the spin-off benefits of space technology. I look forward to our discussions of these important issues.

With regard to the records of meetings, in resolution 51/123 the General Assembly noted with satisfaction that at its thirty-ninth session, the Committee had been provided with unedited verbatim transcripts in lieu of verbatim records. Following a request by the General Assembly, the Committee will evaluate the use of unedited transcripts at this session and inform it, through the Committee on Conferences, of its experience with the transcripts.

I wish to inform the Committee that the International Space University, a non-governmental organization, has applied for observer status with the Committee. The observer status of this organization will be considered under the item "Other matters".

Concerning the agenda item "Methods of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies", the package proposal by the former Chairman of this Committee, which contained elements for consensus agreement on the composition of the Bureau, agenda structures and the duration of the sessions of the Committee and its Subcommittees, has been formally adopted by the Committee. This package proposal is the result of extensive work, untiring efforts and a high level of compromise and cooperation by all members of the Committee. In order to give formal recognition to this important work, the package proposal will be annexed to the report of the Committee.

We are at a critical point in history. In spite of spectacular advances in science and technology, the level of poverty continues to persist, particularly in the developing countries, which account for over 80 per cent of the world's population but account for a mere 12 per cent of global GDP. The combined effects of exploding population growth and poor agricultural productivity have led to large-scale deforestation, extensive soil erosion, mismanagement of water resources and serious degradation of the environment. Large-scale urbanization due to migration of the rural population to urban areas in search of gainful employment, rapid industrialization and poor infrastructure exacerbate the situation as regards poor living conditions in large cities.

Interconnectivity of both natural and anthropogenic phenomena occurring on Earth – the weather, climate, geosphere and biosphere – have inextricably linked the fate of each country with that of the world as a whole. Increases in greenhouse gases, deforestation and

depletion of the ozone layer result in global warming which has repercussions world-wide: disturbances in El Nino and ENSO can result in severe drought across Asia, Australasia and Africa; volcanic eruptions and indiscriminate industrial activity can change the pattern of rain precipitation across the globe. All this clearly demonstrates the need for a global view for the survival of all of humankind, who have yet to realize that land is not just real estate, a lifeless geosphere, but a true living biosphere.

Our Committee should seize this unique opportunity to strive towards enhancing international cooperation in space activities and further strengthen efforts to make the benefits from space activities available to people everywhere. Present and future space activities must contribute to the economic security of all countries, particularly the developing countries, and must continue to promote sustainable development of the global society.

The fundamental aspect of long-term sustainable development strategy must necessarily be based on the paradigm of technological innovation, economic determination and physical constraints, arising from the need to strike a judicious balance between ultimate exploitability and regenerative capacity. All nations must think globally and act locally, because the survival of our planet as a whole depends on the restoration of equity and assurance of the minimum needs to all peoples of the world. One of our most important tasks in the future will be to provide a common platform for the exchange of information and ideas on the optimal utilization of space science and technology to achieve long-term sustainable development, and to develop appropriate strategies for economic reconstruction of the developing world.

We have much to do in the remaining three years of this century. We cannot afford to fail in fulfilling the expectations and rewarding the faith which people and nations hold in the United Nations system in general, and this Committee in particular. The success of UNISPACE III in 1999 and the fulfilment of our mandate for promoting international cooperation in space activities and seeking immediate solutions to the various complex issues on a consensus basis, must be accorded the highest priority. It is my hope that with the continued political commitment of the members of this Committee, we will succeed in making pro-active decisions, thus contributing to global prosperity through the promotion of enhanced international cooperation in the use of space technology.

Thank you for your attention, and my best wishes for another successful session.

Before we start our consideration of agenda item 5, "General exchange of views", I would like to make some general comments on our work schedule and practical arrangements of the session. In conformity with our usual practice, the indicative schedule of work annexed to the agenda just adopted will be as flexible as possible and may be adjusted if necessary. However, it if appears that we might conclude our session earlier than scheduled, we must so inform the Secretariat as soon as possible so that conference service staff can be assigned to other duties.

We will shortly begin the general exchange of views, which will continue tomorrow and, if necessary on Wednesday morning (4 June). The list of speakers for the general debate will be closed at the end of tomorrow morning's meeting. Our sessions will be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. It is important that we adhere to this schedule, and I would urge you to cooperate in this respect and thus make maximum use of the conference facilities provided. As from tomorrow morning, all meetings will be held in Conference Room III (seventh floor, C building), and the documents counter will be located on the seventh floor adjacent to the Coffee Corner.

Before beginning our discussion of agenda item 5, "General exchange of views", I give the floor to the Secretariat to make a general announcement.

? ? ? ? ? ? ? (Secretariat): On the occasion of the fortieth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the Permanent Representative of Austria, Ambassador Mayrhofer, requests the pleasure of the company of heads and members of delegations at a reception to be held today, at 6 p.m., in the restaurant of the Vienna International Centre.

General exchange of views

The CHAIRMAN: The first speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of Brazil, on behalf of the Group of 77.

Mr. A. DE OURO-PRETO (Brazil): On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to congratulate you and the distinguished representatives from Chile and Morocco on your election to the Bureau. I am sure that this Committee will benefit from your vast experience and knowledge.

During the consultation process which has taken place since the 1996 session of the Committee, the Group of 77 has pointed out that the rules of procedure of the General Assembly provide for principles of equitable geographic representation and rotation as concerns the election of officers to the bureaus of various United Nations Committees and subsidiary bodies. The Group's wish was to see these principles being applied to COPUOS and its Subcommittees as soon as this could be achieved in an objective manner; with the election of the new Bureau, our hope has become a reality. We would also like to thank the former Bureau for their dedicated and excellent work, and especially the outgoing Chairman, Ambassador Hohenfellner, for his masterful work during the inter-sessional informal consultations on the working methods of COPUOS.

The Group of 77 and China has carefully considered the Chairman's package proposal, and would recall in this respect that the Chairman pointed out that this proposal was the minimum common denominator which could be arrived at. As concerns our position on the package proposal. We still feel there are several outstanding issue regarding the working methods which must be addressed in the future, but in the spirit of consensus we support the proposal as now presented. We would also like to reaffirm that our willingness to accept the package proposal is on the understanding that the candidates of our regional groups will be accepted.

As concerns the discussions in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on preparations for UNISPACE III, our Group has played a major role and sets out in document A/AC.105/C.1/L/212 its position on, among others, the date, financial aspects, meeting pattern and agenda for the Conference. We are happy to note the progress already made concerning the objectives, organization, financial aspects, annotated provisional agenda, and other components of the Conference. In order to contribute to the success of UNISPACE III, which is of particular importance to us, we will be participating actively in the preparatory work.

Last but certainly not least, I would like to state the Group's views concerning the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee. We believe that while new items should be added, the presents agenda items of the Subcommittee should be maintained, particularly as concerns the item on the geostationary orbit. The working paper submitted by Colombia on this subject merits further detailed discussion, and no item should be removed from the agenda until such substantive discussion has taken place. We therefore cannot support any proposal to delete the item on the geostationary orbit from the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee.

The Group of 77 and China offers the Chair its full support in the important discussions which will take place during this session of the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: The next speaker on my list is he distinguished representative of India.

Mr. Y. TIWARI (India): I would firstly like to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of this Committee. Your vast experience and wealth of knowledge in the field of the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space, and particularly in promoting international cooperation and spreading the benefits of the applications of space technology, will undoubtedly steer the Committee towards further successes. The Indian delegation also congratulates Ambassador González and Professor Kabbaj, whose experience in the Committee and in the field of outer space will ensure that they make significant contributions to the work of COPUOS.

On behalf of the Government and people of India, I would like to express our deep appreciation and gratitude to the Committee for electing, by consensus, a very eminent fellow countryman of mine as Chairman of COPUOS at this important point in time. Since its inception, this Committee has set a tradition of taking decisions by consensus and has an impressive array of contributions towards the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and useful uses of outer space. My delegation greatly appreciates the confidence shown by the members of this Committee to the new Chairman in entrusting him with this immense responsibility, and reaffirms its support for maintaining the rich traditions of consensus.

Space technology continues to grow at a rapid pace, taking advantage of rapid advances in interrelated fields, such as microelectronics, materials and information technologies. These advances have not only enabled the growth of known applications of space technology, but have also introduced several new applications such as personal mobile communications, navigation and decision support systems at the macro and micro level for applications which range from disaster management to the sustainable development of land and water resources by individual farmers. Therefore, the relevance of the applications of space technology today is not confined to a mere handful of nations: all of mankind has benefited. Such universal benefit is possible provided that there is continued international cooperation

and respect for the principle that outer space is the common heritage of mankind.

COPUOS has laid strong foundations both for the promotion of international cooperation and for maintaining outer space as the common heritage of mankind. A unique multilateral body within the United Nations for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space, COPUOS is responsible for the evolution and establishment of international law in this specific field. The five treaties which were conceived and drafted by COPUOS, as well as the other sets of legal principles adopted by the General Assembly on such wide-ranging subjects as international television broadcasting by satellite, remote sensing of Earth by satellite, use of nuclear power sources in space and outer space benefits, are testimony to this Committee's achievements. In order to build upon them and further increase international cooperation in this field, COPUOS has continued to examine relevant scientific, technological and legal issues which have arisen from recent global developments.

Given that the dynamics of technological change in the present-day world are both rapid and complex, COPUOS needs a sound strategy to deal with these changes. This does not mean that COPUOS should duplicate the work of other bodies: on the contrary, COPUOS should draw upon the strengths of other bodies and harmonize its work, focusing above all on achieving its own goals. Central to this role will be the Committee's ability to achieve political consensus on issues arising in the context of rapidly changing technologies and the ways and means by which their applications are pursued.

New developments in the field of outer space mean that attention must continue to be paid to maintaining a space environment which is reasonably clean, and accessible to all countries and to future generations. These developments in turn demand great coordination and cooperative efforts in activities pertaining to outer space undertaken by States in order to preserve it as the common heritage of mankind. The unique capability of space to provide scientific knowledge which will enhance our ability to protect the Earth's environment should be exploited more vigorously. The dynamism to meet these challenges can only come about with a clear vision of the goals of the Committee and efficient working methods. Our efforts to meet these challenges as we approach the new millennium should continue.

Let me briefly mention UNISPACE III, a subject which merits the Committee's urgent consideration during its current and future sessions. The consensus reached to convene a special session of the Committee open to all Member States of the United Nations – UNISPACE III – in July 1999 is a momentous decision. It provides a unique opportunity for increasing cooperation. Several important aspects have already been agreed upon during the thirty-fourth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. Pursuant to the mandate of the General Assembly, our Committee should act as the Preparatory Committee to the Conference, and it is therefore appropriate to consider the aspects of the preparatory work relating to the substantive items of the agenda at the current session. This process should involve all United Nations Member States, relevant United Nations specialized agencies, observers in the Committee, and appropriate non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations. An action plan, including a schedule for informing and inviting the above-mentioned organizations and Member States as concerns these preparatory activities need to be addressed. My delegation urges that the subject of preparatory activities should be taken up on a priority basis in this Committee.

Concerning the work of the thirty-fourth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, my delegation is please to note considerable progress under the various agenda items, in particular on the subject of space debris and UNISPACE III. We greatly appreciate the work carried out by the Subcommittee in fufilling the tasks entrusted to it by both COPUOS and the General Assembly as concerns UNISPACE III. The Subcommittee will hold only two sessions between now and the holding of the Conference; therefore, the work of the Subcommittee as the Advisory Committee for the Conference should be given priority attention.

With respect to the work of the Legal Subcommittee, my delegation would like the discussion on identifying new items for its agenda to continue. We welcome the inclusion of the new agenda item entitled "Review of the status of the five international legal instruments on outer space".

My delegation would like to commend the excellent work carried out by the Working Group of the Whole, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Hohenfellner, on the working methods of the Committee, and his efforts to reach the consensus package proposal.

I will briefly mention some important events which are planned under the Indian Space Programme

for 1997. The launch of the second generation multi-purpose Indian satellite INSAT-2D is schedule to take place in Kourou (French Guyana) on 3 June. This satellite, similar to its predecessor INSAT-2C, will enhance capacity in the field of telecommunications and television broadcasting. The launch of the Indian remote sensing satellite IRS-ID, through the next flight of the Indian Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) is planned for the latter half of this year.

As in the past, India is continuing to vigorously pursue a broad spectrum of the applications of space technology in such fields as agriculture, crop monitoring, forest surveys, waste land development, urban planning, drought monitoring, water resource management and coastal zone studies. Large-scale projects aimed at using communication satellites for developmental and educational activities are also planned. In view of the continuing need to launch communications satellites, the Geostationary Launch Vehicle development programme is in progress, whose aim is to launch such application satellites in future into geostationary transfer orbit.

The Indian Space Programme's thrust towards developing cooperation with other space agencies continues. The IRS-P3 satellite, which was launched in 1996 and is currently in operation, carries a Modular Opto-electronic Scanner (MOS) payload of the German space establishment DLR. Data from Indian remote sensing satellites are also made available through commercial channels to the international community. The Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Asia and the Pacific began its second course on 1 January 1997 on the subject of space communications. Thirteen people from nine countries in the region are taking part in the course. The next course, on remote sensing and GIS, is scheduled to be begin on 1 October.

Mr. Chairman, your assuming the Chair at this time has great significance for developing countries. It is also the first time that someone from a developing nation has assumed the chairmanship of COPUOS. It is important to note here your own background: a very eminent scientist and administrator. In continuing the excellent work of Ambassador Hohenfellner, your own valuable insights concerning space technology will be of great benefit to this Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: The next speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of Germany.

Mr. G. FULDA (Germany): I refer to rule 110 of our rules of procedure, which states "Congratulations to the officers ... shall not be expressed". It is my firm intention to neglect this instruction! Your presence in the Chair highlights a political and institutional development of this Committee which my delegation welcomes wholeheartedly. We are proud to have made a significant contribution to establishing a very delicate balance between unavoidable political changes, on the one hand, and maintaining the unique character and qualifications of COPUOS, on the other.

Your are presiding over the fortieth session of the Committee. In some cultures, 40 is a holy figure; 40 years is the lifespan of one generation. What we are experiencing today is a change of generations in an important United Nations Committee. As in family life, those changes do not always occur without tension and conflict. We can recall some of the results of such tension at our last meeting. However, after 12 months of extensive consultations, the family of space-oriented nations seems to have regained the will to survive, and the harmony of and dedication to consensus, which has been and will remain the prerequisites for our fruitful work. The transition period has been skilfully negotiated by Ambassador Hohenfellner: this Committee owes him the highest respect and I would ask the Austrian delegation to convey the thanks of the German delegation to him.

We must be fair to the first generation: its structures have become outdated, its agenda looked somewhat inflexible, and repetition prevailed over innovation. Nevertheless, the first 40 years of COPUOS has been a highly appreciated success story in international law-making. The technical, juridical and political expertise of our predecessors has compiled an impressive set of legal instruments governing outer space activities. However, my delegation was among the first to realize how deeply the traditional structure of this Committee had been embedded in the political logic of the cold war period. By 1989, not only the antagonistic blocs had withered away, but even before then, developing countries had emerged on the scene of space-faring nations, requesting full participation and representation in the work of this Committee and its institutional structures. The time for change was long overdue.

Change could not simply mean that some delegations be allowed to achieve the reforms they had been hoping for at the expense of the interests of others. To have blindly followed other United Nations patterns would not have satisfied the needs of a Committee which depends heavily on close and continuous interaction between scientists, technicians, lawyers and diplomats. In

fact, my delegation is convinced that the future of COPUOS will depend to a large extent on the calibre of the knowledge assembled in this body. That is why we have strongly advocated efficiency, savings in both costs and time, and concentration on issues of true relevance to future cooperation in space. Budgetary constraints which many countries are experiencing compel us to avoid any unnecessary waste of energy and resources.

When expressing our deep appreciation to Ambassador Hohenfellner for all his hard work, so many things come to mind. He kept the main issues together: political reform, but maintaining the special characteristics necessary to achieve the requisite quality and high standards; new agenda items, but continued efforts to cut into dead wood for new findings; political debate and sometimes controversial discussions, but at the same time stressing the paramount importance of consensus in achieving results.

Mr. Chairman, you are assuming your position at a critical point in time. You represent a country which can be proud of its impressive record in the development of space technologies. With your outstanding professional experience, your scientific, technical and administrative background, as well as the diplomatic skills which you have deployed for many years in this Committee, you will be the first leader of the next COPUOS generation. On behalf of my delegation and myself, I wish to express our heartfelt congratulations on your election as the first Chairman of the reformed COPUOS.

The CHAIRMAN: We have come to the end of our allocated time for this session. The Committee will reconvene promptly at 10 a.m. tomorrow morning. The meeting is now adjourned.

The sitting adjourned at 6 p.m.

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Unedited transcript

434th Meeting
Tuesday, 3 June 1997, 10 a.m.
Vienna

Chairman: Mr. RAO (India)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

The CHAIRMAN: I now declare open the 434th meeting of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

I would like to inform the Committee that I have received *notes verbales* from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Thailand, in which they request permission to attend the current session of COPUOS as observers. I therefore suggest that, in conformity with past practice, we invite those delegations to attend the current session and to address the Committee as appropriate. This is without prejudice to further requests of this nature and does not involve any decision by the Committee concerning status. It is a courtesy we customarily extend to delegations. If I hear no objections, we shall proceed accordingly.

It is so decided.

This morning we will continue our debate under item 5 of the agenda, "General exchange of views". As I announced yesterday, we will continue our general debate this afternoon and tomorrow morning. It is my intention to close the list of speakers for this agenda item at the end of this morning's meeting; I therefore urge delegations wishing to take the floor under this agenda item to inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible.

This afternoon we will continue our debate on item 5. Once the list of speakers under that item is exhausted, it is my intention to proceed to agenda item 6, "Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes". The same process will apply regarding all agenda items.

Before continuing our debate under agenda item 5, I would like to give the floor to the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, Mr. Jasentuliyana, who will provide the Committee with an overview of the activities of OOSA over the past year.

Mr. N. JASENTULIYANA (Director, Office for Outer Space Affairs; Deputy Director-General, United Nations Office at Vienna): I would like to give you a brief overview of the work of the Office for Outer Space Affairs over the past 12 months, and of the documents prepared by the Office for this session of the Committee.

Before doing so, I would like to convey the congratulations of both myself and the Secretariat to the new Bureau of the Committee. The Secretariat is delighted to see you, Mr. Chairman, assuming the [illegible] of Chairman of the Committee, and we greatly look forward to working with you in the coming sessions. Member States could not have found a better person to lead the revitalized Committee as we prepare for UNISPACE III and other challenges which lie ahead of us. For many years, you have demonstrated both in the United Nations and elsewhere your commitment to ensuring that the benefits of space are shared by all countries.

The Secretariat is also sorry to see Ambassador Hohenfellner, who has so ably led the Committee for several years, leave the Chair. He has always been a strong supporter of the Secretariat and has ensured that it is well established in Vienna, with the programme of the Austrian Space Agency supporting the work of the Office.

We also welcome Ambassador González and Professor Kabbaj, two prominent and experienced promoters of international cooperation in space activities both in the United Nations and in their own countries, who join the Chairman to help lead the Committee for the next three years. My staff are committed to the promotion of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, and are fully prepared to share with

all Member States the extraordinary opportunity to ensure that space technology advances the human condition in the new millennium.

In the Office for Outer Space Affairs, the past year has been a time for developing strategies to face the new challenges in fulfilling its task as the catalyst of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. The Office constantly felt the need for creative and innovative thinking to adjust its work programme to the rapidly changing environment within and outside the United Nations, while continuing to further enhance the quality of services for the international community.

Over recent years, various strategies have been suggested and adopted to reform the United Nations and streamline its work, while responding to the needs of the changing global society. Continuous efforts have been made to identify high-priority programmes and to ensure their implementation, despite all departments and offices having been requested to reduce the level of resources required. The Programme on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space aims at maximizing the benefits of space science and technology for all members of the international community, particularly the developing countries. Many Member States, developed and developing countries alike, expressed their support for this Programme, which continues to be of major importance.

The potential of space technology to enhance human security and the human condition is now well established. Data from remote sensing satellites are essential for the protection of the global environment, the enhancement of sustainable development, and to ensure environmental security. Communication satellites also allow the exchange of various information at the global level, contributing to the advancement of socio-economic conditions and enrichment of cultural knowledge. In the changing global society, the role of space science and technology has become crucial, particularly in implementing the recommendations of recent world conferences, such as the Earth Summit in 1992, and achieving the goals defined in the report of the Secretary-General on an Agenda for Peace and an Agenda for Development.

While space technology has already become an integral part of human activities, what is now available in our daily lives is but a mere indication of what space technology can do in the future. As the Secretary-General emphasized in his report, it is the responsibility of the United Nations to play a leading role in global society to meet the challenges of the new era with the innovative use of space technology.

While the Office is aware of its responsibility to meet this challenge in implementing the Programme on the Peaceful Use of Outer Space, it is well aware that to keep the level of required resources to the minimum while increasing the effectiveness of its mandated activities represents a challenge in itself. As far as human resources are concerned, the Office continues to benefit from the services of extremely devoted staff who make untiring efforts to carry out these mandated activities and to better respond to the sharply increasing demands of the international community, in spite of the decrease in available resources. The Office would have been unable to fulfil its role without the special efforts of its staff.

The turnover in personnel of the Office is low; in order to fill the vacancy created by the departure of Mr. Bruce Schoenfeld of the United States, Mr. Mitchell Hsieh of the United States joined the Office in August 1996. The Government of Austria has extended its support to the Office through employment of an associate expert, Mr. Werner Balogh, a specialist in space technology, who joined us earlier this year and replaced Mr. Stephan Mayer, who had successfully completed his two-year assignment. I would like to express our great appreciation to the Government of Austria for its generous support that enables us to better serve the Committee and Member States.

In view of further staff cuts which are foreseen, I would like to make a special appeal to other interested countries to provide associate experts at the junior level and/or senior officers to work with the Office for a year or so. This would strengthen the human resources of the Office and ensure the implementation of its important activities, particularly as concerns operational activities in developing countries. Those experts would in turn benefit from unique working experience with the United Nations and would thereby take those benefits back to their own countries upon completion of their assignments.

Concerning financial resources, the regular budget of the United Nations, which was initially approved by the General Assembly for the 1996-1997 biennium, was $2.61 billion, $20 million less than the level approved in the previous biennium. In 1996, all managers were requested to make changes to their programmes due to these budget reductions, and the Office also had to postpone or cancel some activities which had been planned in the Programme on Space Applications. The proposed programme and budget for the biennium 1998-1999 as presented by the Secretary-General in New York last week represents a further $124 million reduction in appropriations from the current budget. This includes a

reduction of some 1,000 posts from the staffing tables approved for the current biennium and on top of this, a further vacancy rate of 6.4 per cent will be maintained.

In view of the financial situation of the Organization, we recognize that the next three years will be an extremely challenging period. Our mandated activities, in particular those of the Programme on Space Applications, are doomed to be curtailed unless voluntary contribution are forthcoming to make up the deficit. In this respect, voluntary contributions from Member States, specialized agencies of the United Nations and other international organizations are essential in order to meet the increasing demands of the international community for training programmes and technical advisory services. The regular budget generally covers less than one third of the total cost of the programme activities. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation in particular to the European Space Agency, other international organizations and the host countries that have provided local facilities, transportation, accommodation etc. for the programme activities in the past year.

The reports of the 1996 activities of the Programme on Space Applications and the information on its 1997 activities were submitted for review by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, as indicated in document A/AC.105/672. The proposed activities for 1998 were reviewed by the Subcommittee and recommended for approval. Subject to the approval of this Committee and the General Assembly, planning for the 1998 activities is now under way. Following the recommendations of both the Subcommittee and of COPUOS, the Office continued to direct major efforts towards the establishment of regional centres for space science and technology education in developing countries.

I am pleased to report that the Asia and Pacific centre is now operational, and its second course on satellite communications began in January 1997.

In the Latin American and Caribbean region, in March this year Brazil and Mexico signed an agreement establishing the centre in that region. Establishment of centres in Africa, in Morocco and Nigeria (for francophone and anglophone countries respectively), is also well under way. For the Central and Eastern European region, the Office is assisting Member States in participating in international efforts to establish an educational system which will comprise a network of existing space science and technology education institutions in Europe.

The Office continued to make progress in other activities of the Programme, such as the COPINE project to establish an efficient information network among scientists, educators and decision-makers in Africa by using satellite-based information systems. Follow-up activities to the various workshops and seminars organized under the auspices of the Programme, particularly in the field of space science, have yielded concrete results in the enhancement of regional cooperation.

The Office also assisted the Government of Uruguay in organizing the third Conference of the Americas, which successfully concluded its work by the adoption of the Declaration of Punta del Este and a Plan of Action for the region (which was circulated to all Member States in Latin America and the Caribbean). The Office will continue to provide technical advisory assistance to the Government of Uruguay in implementation of the follow-up activities.

The staff of the Programme on Space Applications and the entire Office continue to work assiduously to ensure the effective and efficient organization of those activities. I would like in particular to acknowledge the efforts of Dr. Abiodun, Expert on Space Applications, in planning and managing those activities. He will report in detail on the activities of the Programme on Space Applications under agenda item 7, "Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee".

The Committee Services and Resource Section of the Office has given full attention over the last year to responding to the request of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for technical and legal studies and other analytical reports on various aspects of space activities. The Office continued to enhance its information services for Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the general public, in particular through the international space information service, the establishment of which was recommended by UNISPACE 82 and endorsed by the General Assembly.

As part of the follow-up to the efficiency review, the Office has made further efforts to increase efficiency in the provision of information services by increased use of the Internet. The Office created its Home Page to allow Internet users to learn more about the work of the Office and the space-related activities of the United Nations, and it is updated on a daily basis. The Home Page contains information on al the space-related legal instruments adopted by the General Assembly, including their full texts, information on COPUOS and

its subsidiary bodies (including their reports and documents), and an overview of the Programme on Space Applications. I am pleased to announce that the Home Page has received positive feedback from other United Nations offices as well as the space community and the general public. On the basis of these comments, the Home Page is being further developed to better respond to user needs.

In connection with the use of Internet for the international space information service, the Office continues its cooperation with the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS) and the German Space Agency in establishing the CEOS information locator service. The prime function of this service is to assist users in developing countries to locate and access the sources of information on Earth observation data, projects and services. The system demonstrator is already available on Internet.

In order to further enhance the coordination of space-related activities among the organizations within the United Nations system, the Office has also lead inter-agency efforts to expand the use of Internet, as request by the inter-agency meeting on outer space activities. At the eighteenth session of the meeting (held last week), the Office made a proposal to expand the use of Internet for more frequent exchange of information on space-related activities within the United Nations system. The meeting welcomed the proposal and agreed to proceed with the implementation of the initial phase of the proposal, which would allow a visitor to the Office's Home Page to visit the Home Pages of other organizations with space activities. The meeting also agreed to give further consideration to how to implement the development of other phases of the project, namely the utilization of the Internet, in preparing the annual report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space activities, and the establishment of an electronic forum for inter-agency dialogue on a more frequent basis. This would further enhance inter-agency coordination of space applications activities.

As part of the international space information service, and in response to the request of the Working Group of the Whole of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, the Office submitted two technical studies this year, "Basic space science in developing countries" and "The use of new technologies in satellite communications and information networks". These two studies are contained in documents A/AC.105/664 and 665. They were submitted to outside experts for review prior to publication, and we would like to thank those experts for providing this valuable service at no cost to the Office.

Information on the space activities of Member States is contained in documents A/AC.105/661/Add.1 and Add.2, which were submitted to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. In response to the request by the Subcommittee and its Working Group of the Whole, reports on national and international space activities have been submitted by 26 countries. These reports contain information on spin-offs, resources and capabilities of States in space activities for the promotion of cooperation, and other activities which could be the subject of greater international cooperation. In response to the Subcommittee's request in 1996, Member States submitted their reports on national and international research concerning the safety of orbiting space objects with nuclear power sources on board, and the collision of those objects with space debris. Member States also submitted information on the development of technology for monitoring space debris: those reports and information are contained in document A/AC.105/659, Add.1 and Add.2. Updated information on various steps taken by space agencies for reducing the growth or damage potential of space debris was also submitted to the Subcommittee in document A/AC.105/663.

During the 1997 session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, a number of technical presentations were made by experts, which provided the Subcommittee with valuable information on the latest developments in space applications. Due to the importance of those technical presentations, the Office prepared a summary of them for distribution to this Committee, as contained in document A/AC.105/673.

I will briefly review the Office's cooperation with other international and regional organizations over the past year. The coordination of space activities within the United Nations system is conducted through the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, referred to earlier. The annual meeting allows all interested organizations of the United Nations system to exchange information on planned space-related activities, and to coordinate those activities. In this way, the Meeting aims to prevent the duplication of work, and to identify activities which could be carried out through joint inter-agency efforts. Further enhancement of this coordination is anticipated in view of the expanded use of Internet.

At this year's session (which concluded last Friday), the meeting finalized and adopted the Secretary-General's report on coordination of space activities within the United Nations system for 1997, 1998 and

future years. This report, together with the report of the meeting itself, will be made available to you during the session of the Committee.

The Office for Outer Space Affairs continued its close cooperation with the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) and the International Astronautical Federation (IAF), and I would like to express our appreciation for their generous support over the last year. With the assistance of COSPAR and IAF we have again issued the publication "Highlights in space", which is before the Committee in document A/AC.105/654. This publication contains the report submitted by COSPAR on progress in space research, and the report by IAF on space science and applications. With reference to the section on space law in this publication, input was provided by the International Institute of Space Law.

At the invitation of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and in cooperation with the Office, COSPAR and IAF also organized a technical symposium on the theme fixed by the Subcommittee at this year's session for special attention: space systems for direct broadcasting and global information systems for space research. They enlisted some of the foremost experts in the rapidly developing fields of satellite direct broadcasting and global information systems, and the presentations were both timely and highly informative. The summary of these presentations is contained in document A/AC.105/673.

In cooperation with the IAF, prior to the annual IAF Congress held in Beijing in October 1996, the Office again organized a workshop to address the needs of developing countries under the theme "Education awareness, space technology and applications in the developing world". The workshop was co-sponsored by the United Nations, IAF and ESA, and was organized with the invaluable support of the Government of China. This was the sixth in an ongoing series of such activities for developing countries, and the Office is now in the process of organizing the seventh workshop to be held prior to the 1997 IAF Congress in Turin, Italy, for which we are counting on the strong support of the Government of Italy.

In cooperation with COSPAR, the Office organized a Panel on Space Science in Developing Countries during the Assembly of COSPAR held in Birmingham in July 1996. The Panel reviewed space education developments in different parts of the world. In accordance with an agreement of the Panel, a workshop on data analysis techniques will be held in Brazil in November this year, to be organized under the auspices of COSPAR and the United Nations Office on Outer Space Affairs, in cooperation with the newly established United Nations affiliated Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. The workshop is designed to expose participants to the access, analysis and interpretation of data acquired by Earth observation satellites.

In addition to other offices and departments within the organizations of the United Nations system and the international organizations mentioned above, a number of governmental and non-governmental organizations provided generous support for the activities of the Programme on Space Applications. I would like to express our deep appreciation to all those organizations and once again to ESA, and in particular the staff of the International Relations Department, headed by Mr. Giampalmo, for continuing the tradition of providing vital financial and technical assistance for the Programme. The European Space Agency and United Nations working partnership with the developing countries has been an important component of international cooperation in the field of space, and we look forward to continuing that cooperation with ESA under the leadership of Mr. Giampalmo, who has recently taken over the ESA international programme. I would like to welcome him to the Committee, and wish him a successful tenure in his new capacity.

I would like to assure the Committee of our commitment to further enhancing cooperation and coordination with other international and regional organizations, particularly in fulfilling the task entrusted to us by the General Assembly to serve as the Executive Secretariat for the UNISPACE III Conference. We are pleased that the Advisory Committee was able to finalize the form, venue, date, participation, provisional annotated agenda and the additional components of the Conference, to assist this Committee, in its role as the Preparatory Committee, for consideration and adoption at the present session. On the basis of those recommendations, the Secretariat has already put in motion the preliminary preparations for the Conference, which is scheduled to take place from 19 to 30 July 1999 in Vienna.

At the session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities held last week, attended by key organizations within the United Nations system in the field of space-related activities, I am pleased to report that the Office was requested to convey to the Preparatory Committee of UNISPACE III the willingness and intention of the organizations of the United Nations system to contribute to the attainment of the objectives of

the Conference. The Meeting also agreed that it would be desirable to have a theme for UNISPACE III, and suggested that the Preparatory Committee might wish to consider the theme "Space benefits for humanity in the twenty-first century". The Meeting further agreed to recommend that particular attention be paid in the agenda of the Conference to enhancing the use of space-based information and communications technology in order to strengthen operational global observing systems so that they may become more effective in the twenty-first century. Another priority area identified by the Meeting for consideration by the Committee is the promotion of the wider use of space technologies in the prevention and mitigation of the effects of natural and technological disasters, the provision of relief, and the monitoring of environmental changes at the global level.

Based on the further recommendations and decisions to be made by this Committee at the current session, the Office is prepared to organize regional meetings for UNISPACE III in cooperation with other United Nations bodies, in particular the regional economic commissions and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, in such a way as to best achieve the objectives of the Conference. To assist the work of the Advisory Committee and the Preparatory Committee, the Office has also prepared a list of background papers which will cover the substantive agenda items of the Conference (document A/AC.105/1997/CRP.4). The Office will also invite organizations of the United Nations system, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations with space-related activities, to contribute the benefit of their expertise to producing these background papers.

In addition to the report on matters concerning the planning and execution of the special session of the Committee, UNISPACE III, as contained in document A/AC.105/662, and supplementary information to that report (document A/AC.105/C.1/1997/CRP.8), which were submitted to the Advisory Committee, I hope the information contained therein will facilitate the work of the Preparatory Committee in planning for the Conference in the most effective and efficient manner possible. The Office has taken note of the agreement of this Committee to make every effort to limit the costs of the Conference within existing resources for the Committee and its Secretariat. On the assumption that the same level of resources as in the current biennium will be available for the next biennium (i.e. 1998-1999), every effort will be made to keep the cost of the Conference within the resources available. We are of course looking to Member States and space agencies to provide us with short-term experts and other support to assist us in the work of the Conference. I would urge those who may be interested to give some thought to providing experts to the Secretariat to assist in preparations for the Conference.

In order to minimize the costs of the Conference while at the same time taking into account the recommendations of the Advisory Committee concerning its organization and associated activities, efforts will be made to limit the use of the Austria Center, where the Conference will be held, by using the facilities in the Vienna International Centre (VIC) to the fullest extent possible. Due to the slightly different configuration of the Conference, pending the final arrangements, there may be some nominal additional costs as concerns equipment transfer, security services, and some conference services and clerical assistance costs during the actual Conference. The space exhibition will be organized on a commercial basis in a new exhibit hall to be opened at the Austria Center prior to UNISPACE III.

As concerns the permanent space exhibit at the Vienna International Centre, the Office continued to expand this exhibition of space-related items, which emphasizes international cooperation in space activities and focuses on the practical uses of space technology, particularly for environmental monitoring and natural resource management. It is housed in the VIC visitors' building, in G-Building, on the fifth floor, and is viewed by approximately 70,000 visitors annually. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Member States and international organizations which have provided material for the permanent exhibit, and if other governments are interested we are always willing and pleased to accommodate such exhibits. For those who may not have visited the exhibit, it has recently been refurbished and is open for visitors.

As the United Nations continues to review its entire work programme and prepares its scenario for reform and restructuring under the leadership of the new Secretary-General, the Office is well aware of its responsibility to further increase its efficiency and effectiveness in implementing the programme on the peaceful uses of outer space. The Office is prepared to be an "idea generator" for the United Nations Organization, suggesting innovative ways and means to further streamline work while maximizing the quality of services. This was the case with the adoption of the use of unedited verbatim transcripts by the Committee and its Legal Subcommittee, as well as the new format for convening a global United Nations conference. The contributions of the Office were recognized by the

United Nations Efficiency Board, which was established to conduct the efficiency review and to monitor the implementation of its recommendations. The results of the Organization-wide efficiency review were published in the report "United Nations 21: Better service, better value, better management".

I am happy to report that the efficiency review team of the Office was selected as one of the best five team — the only one outside United Nations Headquarters in New York recognized for the concrete results achieved to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. A number of recommendations made by the team include those to direct more resources to priority areas of activity, as identified by Member States, and to further enhance the information services and inter-agency coordination by the expanded use of available advanced information technologies. In order to face the challenges of the coming years in fulfilling its mandated task in a changing world, the Office considers it essential to maintain close contact with Member States. The Office therefore welcomes any suggestions and ideas concerning how it can best serve Member States. As Kofi Annan, the new Secretary-General, has emphasized, the United Nations needs to work in partnership with Member States.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for your excellent and informative statement. I am sure that all here present will join me in commending the excellent work which you and your Office is doing. I would also like to thank you for your kind words addressed to the new Bureau — and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the distinguished representatives of Brazil, India and Germany for their kind words addressed to the new Bureau yesterday.

We will now continue our debate on agenda item 5.

General exchange of views (cont.)

The CHAIRMAN: The first speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of France.

Mr. P. LOUET (France) *(interpretation from French)*: My delegation is particularly happy to welcome you to the Chair of this Committee. For many years you have led the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and you have made that body both effective and highly renowned — ideal qualifications for your present post as our Chairman.

To justify a change in the Bureau of our Committee, reference has been made to geographical rotation, but I think that another kind of rotation was also envisaged. At a time when space activities are growing in their importance, it is perhaps the moment to have someone of scientific repute succeed a series of extremely talented diplomats. For 17 years you have been a member of the Committee, so we have all come to know you; you have been at the very origin of UNISPACE III, which is an important agenda item of our current session. In France we know you well, as thanks to you, ISRO has been a valuable partner of CNES. Your experience in the field of international cooperation covers both its theoretical and practical side, making you a perfect candidate for the head of a Committee whose major role is to promote international cooperation in outer space activities. As the Committee looks for a new thrust for its activities, having you as its Chairman will guarantee the continued excellent reputation of COPUOS.

I would like to say a few words about Ambassador Hohenfellner. My delegation regrets his departure as we have always admired his professional and efficient guidance of our work in addition to his many other commitments. We owe him our gratitude for the time and effort he has dedicated to COPUOS – and finally, the package proposal leading to the new composition of the Bureau. The Committee will also be revitalized thanks to the new working methods introduced.

I would like to briefly touch on the issue of consensus, already referred to, and which is of prime importance. This has always been the basis of the work of our Committee; the free consent of all parties is a prerequisite for the success of our work. The new working methods should be applied with a degree of flexibility, provided that consensus is always uppermost in our thoughts.

At this point in our debate, most delegations list their activities in the field of space over the past 12 months. My delegation has criticized this pattern as we feel this takes up too much of the Committee's time. You will therefore find all the relevant information on space activities of France in document A/AC.105/661/Add.2. However, I would like to draw the Committee's attention to one aspect of our space activity which should be highlighted. In 1996, France spent FF 12 billion in the field of outer space activities, and the portion of that which was devoted to international cooperation programmes, including those involving the USA, represents just over FF 9 billion, some 75 per cent

of the budget. Within the strategic plan implemented by CNES this year, cooperation with international partners is being pursued bilaterally and with the ESA. This demonstrates the importance we attach to international cooperation in outer space activities, and in this same spirit, this year we adopted the declaration on international cooperation with Germany. These activities support our proposal concerning possible themes for inclusion on the agenda of UNISPACE III.

As concerns UNISPACE III, my delegation believes we now have a general framework which has allowed us to reach agreement on an annotated provisional agenda which will include discussions on the application of space technologies, and to look at future workplans in the area of provision of information, research and training. During UNISPACE III we must examine exactly where we stand, and with the approach of the new millennium we must try to look at the situation from a scientific perspective. Public awareness must be enhanced, as well as that of decision makers in the field of space and its applications. UNISPACE III will only be successful if it triggers the necessary technical debates and not merely political debate, which might more suitably take place in other forums.

With reference to the recent meetings of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, the work of the former as regards space debris is making good progress. Cooperation with the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) will help us reach a better understanding of this subject. The Legal Subcommittee will then be given the necessary information to allow them to address this topic, especially in the areas of prevention and responsibility.

As concerns health, telemedicine and technological activities in outer space, my country is making extensive efforts in cooperation with the Russian Federation and the United States. In a few months' time, Léopold Eyharts will be on board the Mir space station (the Pegasus mission), followed by Jean-Loup Chrétien, who will be on board the American shuttle STS-86 mission, to help prepare the programme for the International Space Station.

Two main topics were before the Legal Subcommittee: the first was divided into two parts, the delimitation of outer space and the use of the geostationary satellite orbit. On the first point, my delegation continues to believe that we should not pursue a fruitless examination of something which has implications on space law itself. On the second point, the German delegation, taking due account of the work done by the delegation of Colombia, presented a draft resolution requesting the ITU to guarantee equitable access to geostationary satellite orbital resources and access to the radiofrequency spectrum. We support this approach, as we would like to finalize a discussion which has been going on for over 20 years. There seems little point in adopting a text which, in a spirit of compromise, falls under the purview of ITU.

My final comment refers to the hours we have taken up in discussing the geostationary orbit and the delimitation of outer space. My delegation feels the time allotted to the Legal Subcommittee should be better utilized; the rapid evolution of new technologies and organization of space activities allows for new legal instruments to emerge in the foreseeable future. We would like to contribute to this, and we intend to continue our work in this direction on subjects which we consider of priority importance for the future, along with our partners within ESA.

My delegation reserves its right to speak again once we begin our more detailed discussion of the agenda items before us.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your very lucid statement, and for your kind words addressed to the Chair and the new Bureau members. The next speaker on my list is the distinguished ambassador of Bolivia, who will speak on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group of States.

Mr. E. MEYER MEDINA (Observer, Bolivia) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I am honoured to make this statement on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group. First of all, I would like to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election. I am sure that with your assistance the Committee will achieve excellent results and I am pleased to see you guiding these important discussions. It is also an honour for our region that the First Vice-Chairman, Ambassador González, is a distinguished representative of GRULAC. His professionalism, experience and knowledge of this subject are well known to all here present.

GRULAC would like to express its deep appreciation to Ambassador Hohenfellner, in particular for the way in which he has presided over the inter-sessional informal consultations on the working methods of COPUOS. GRULAC played an active role in those meetings and made constructive contributions to reaching a solution which is acceptable to all members of the Committee.

We are very happy that on 11 May 1997, the Governments of Brazil and Mexico signed an agreement to set up the regional centre for space science and technology education. This centre will be of benefit to our countries as it will help to strengthen our national capacities in this field, to promote the exchange of information, and will also promote the coordination of space activities among Member States. The Latin American countries have a keen and genuine interest in the centre's activities.

As concerns UNISPACE III, GRULAC welcomes the progress achieved in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, where an agreement was reached on the objectives of the Conference, its format, venue and date, as well as the provisional agenda, an outline of substantive items for discussion, and also its financial implications. International cooperation, the strengthening of national capacities, space law, and training of professionals from developing countries are all subjects which are of major interest to our region and which will be the subject of discussions during UNISPACE III.

When preparing recommendations and the plan of action for the Conference, GRULAC believes it is necessary for participants to take account of the Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interests of all States, taking into particular account the Needs of Developing Countries, as approved by the General Assembly in resolution 51/122 of 13 December 1996. GRULAC is very interested in all the preparatory work within COPUOS for the holding of UNISPACE III, and of particular interest to our region is the United Nations regional conference in Latin America and the Caribbean on space technology and its applications for development. The countries of the region believe that this regional conference will greatly assist the process of preparation to be conducted prior to UNISPACE III. We would appreciate it if the report of the third space Conference of the Americas, which outlines the region's position, could be annexed to the Committee's report, as it represents a contribution to the ongoing process of preparation for UNISPACE III.

In light of recent events in our region, and bearing in mind the importance of nuclear power sources in outer space, GRULAC wishes to make an emphatic appeal for all countries to respect the Principles Relating to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, as approved by the General Assembly in 1992. States who launch space objects with nuclear power sources on board must assume the responsibilities related thereto, in accordance with Articles 8 and 9 of the Principles.

In conformity with the position which GRULAC has maintained throughout the inter-sessional informal consultations on working methods of the Committee, it is our view that the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee needs additional topics for discussion, and we therefore support the proposal by the Mexican delegation to include the item "Review of the status of the five international treaties governing outer space" on its agenda for future sessions. However, GRULAC is not in agreement with the removal of the item on the geostationary orbit from its agenda. To do so would be incompatible with the position which our Group maintained during the informal consultations; we must continue to analyse this matter in the Committee.

In conclusion, the member countries of GRULAC are extremely interested in the subjects for discussion during this session, and accordingly are always prepared to cooperate with the Bureau and other members of the Committee with a view to ensuring a successful conclusion of this session.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your statement and for you kind words addressed to the Chair and the new Bureau members. The next speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of Italy.

Ms. G. ARRIGO (Italy): I would like to wish the new Bureau every success in the work which lies ahead of them. My delegation offers its full support to Professor Rao, and we are sure that under his chairmanship the Committee will progress. We express our appreciation at the inclusion of the subject of a reduction in the duration of the sessions of the Committee and its Subcommittees in the Chairman's package proposal.

Firstly, I would like to invite all delegations here present to Italy on the occasion of the annual meeting of space experts, scientists and policy-makers, the 48th International Astronautical Congress, to be held in Turin from 6 to 10 October 1997. My delegation wants to promote the access of all to international cooperation, and in this context we believe this forum will be a further step towards achieving the respective goals in space research development and international cooperation.

I would like to draw delegates' attention to the Joint United Nations/IAF Workshop on Space Applications for the Benefit of Developing Countries, which will take place in Turin from 2 to 5 October 1997. My country is pleased to support and contribute to the success of this initiative to expand the interrelationship of various space programmes and projects. The Fifth

Space Agencies Forum (SAF) meeting will also take place in Turin on 7 October, co-chaired by the Presidents of the Italian Space Agency and the China National Space Administration. All of you are invited to Turin to promote and examine programmes on outer space and its applications.

I would like to give a brief review of Italy's achievements in space this year. Next August, on board a US shuttle, the Ultraviolet Spectrograph Telescope for Astronomical Research (UVSTAR) developed with the joint cooperation of NASA and ASI, will be launched. On 6 October, the Cassini/Huygens planetary mission will commence; this is designed to send an orbiter spacecraft to the planet Saturn. Italy is contributing to the Cassini mission by way of bilateral cooperation between the Italian Space Agency and NASA. It has also provided a major investigatory instrument to ESA's Huygens probe, the Atmospheric Structure Instrument (HASI); during the descent in Titan's atmosphere, this will provide accurate measurements of pressure, temperature, winds, electrical characteristics, detection of lightning, and surface profiles from the elaboration of the Huygens radar altimeter data.

As concerns our involvement with the International Space Station (ISS), the Italian Government has started the necessary internal approval procedures and hopes to sign the agreement this year. The Italian scientific community is training with a view to joining the new system on board the ISS in the field of manned space flights, robotics, life sciences, astronautics, microgravity, etc. An agreement has been finalized between the Italian Space Agency and ESA on the management, execution and funding of the Node 2 and 3 projects for ISS, approved by NASA. An Italian astronaut, Umberto Guidoni, is currently training at the NASA Johnson Space Center, and he will fly in the first crew of the ISS.

My delegation is pleased to announce the most recent astronomical discovery with the Beppo Sax Italian satellite. The Beppo Sax satellite, for X-ray astronomy, was produced by ASI in collaboration with the Dutch Agency for Space Programmes, and was successfully launched on 30 April 1996. The satellite has given the international scientific community important information to help resolve one of the greatest mysteries of modern astrophysics. For many years, astronomers have known of the existence of sudden bursts of gamma rays from an unknown class of celestial sources. These sources appear unexpectedly from any direction in the sky, and generally last only a few seconds, rather like cosmic fireworks. Until now, no observation has been able to simultaneously localize an emission at other wavelengths, for example optical or radio, even though tremendous efforts to do so have been made over the past 25 years. This is why astronomers have been unable to discover the origin of these gamma-ray bursts.

Beppo Sax was able to detect, for the first time ever, an X-ray emission from the source producing the gamma-ray bursts, localizing the source in the sky with unprecedented precision. Consequently, major world-wide observatories have been observing the zone from which the gamma-rays have been seen, in the hope of discovering the type of astronomical object that produces the burst, and thus resolving the mystery of gamma-ray bursts.

Further international cooperation is already under way, such as that of the China-Italian Committee on the development of common space research, ongoing cooperation with Russia on the Pelikan/Jericho programme with Mir, the collaboration on the spectrum X-gamma programme that will be launched next year, cooperation on the Pamela Project in the astrophysics programmes, and other cooperative arrangements involving life sciences. Other possibilities for bilateral cooperation are being evaluated with developing countries, for example with Brazil, Argentina and Ukraine.

As concerns the application of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 and, in particular, the establishment of the networks of space science and technology education institutions in the framework of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, the Italian Space Agency is pleased to announce its support for this initiative. Under the aegis of the United Nations, it will promote and finalize, with other countries concerned, an agreement for the establishment of a Central Eastern and South Eastern European centre for research, education and applications projects in space science and technology. In cooperating with the Italian Space Agency, the Italian authorities are evaluating the possibility to cooperate with ESA in a COPINE project, based on a proposal by the Office for Outer Space Affairs, which will address the needs of African countries. The internal processes for attaining the consent of the authorities concerned have already been set in motion.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your statement and also for expressing your support to the new Bureau. The next speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of the Czech Republic.

Mr. L. PEREK (Czech Republic): May I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the Committee. Your interest and vast experience in outer space matters is well known and justifies our anticipation of a successful session under your guidance. My delegation wishes to make its contribution to fruitful discussions.

The Committee has adopted new working methods and a new procedure for the election of its Bureau. As we can see, the introduction of this new system has been very smooth, which speaks well for all delegations. But let us not forget the important role played in this process by our former Chairman, Ambassador Hohenfellner. Over the past year he convened several inter-sessional informal consultations and guided us to a solution acceptable to all. He prepared a proposal which was adopted by consensus, an important principle of the work of this Committee. I would like to express our most sincere thanks to him: we now reap the benefit of his efforts.

COPUOS is supposed to be the focal point for international cooperation in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space, and to maintain close contact with governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with outer space matters. My delegation is satisfied with the information received on a regular basis from the specialized agencies, in particular the ITU, which is concerned both with space applications and with the regulation of specific space activities.

However, we note that COPUOS does not receive information on the activities of one body in the United Nations which is concerned with outer space, namely the Conference on Disarmament, which is concerned with different aspects of outer space to those of our own Committee, but sometimes in a wider context than disarmament. COPUOS has never been informed of such deliberations although they may indeed have touched on the subject of the peaceful uses of outer space. We do not propose to deal with matters in this Committee which pertain to the Conference on Disarmament, but as a focal point, my delegation feels that COPUOS should have as much relevant information as possible before it.

As concerns agenda items, my delegation appreciates the work carried out by the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. In particular, we refer here to the eight volumes of the seminars of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications; the series of annual "Highlights in space: Progress in space science, technology and applications, prepared by the IAF and COSPAR, and the series of reports on the UN/ESA/IAF workshops, organized by OOSA. This all provides a wealth of up-to-date and authoritative information on space applications, and will doubtless prove invaluable at a time when preparations for UNISPACE III are under way.

Significant progress has been made in the last session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, in particular on the item concerning space debris. The technical presentations made by eminent experts in the field were of a very high quality, giving long-range perspectives of the development of the debris population. My delegation welcomes the adoption, by space agencies in launching countries who participate in the Inter-Agency Coordination Committee (IADC), of measures to restrict the amount of debris to be generated in the future. The main feature of this is that it was agreed on a voluntary basis and the measures have already been put into operation. We look forward to hearing a report on further progress from the representative of the IADC next year. In 1998 the technical report on space debris should be finalized; in 1999, the Subcommittee will doubtless focus its attention on UNISPACE III, thus leaving only limited time available to deal with other matters. The technical report on space debris is vital, as it will provide a solid basis upon which this Committee can make a decision on the future course of action.

This session of the Committee also sees us acting as the Preparatory Committee for UNISPACE III. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, in its role as Advisory Committee, prepared proposals for nearly all aspects of the Conference at its last session. My delegation in general supports these proposals, in particular the emphasis placed on space applications. We are also interested in those components of UNISPACE III which allow selected non-governmental organizations to play a role.

Regarding the work of the Legal Subcommittee, my delegation will make a statement at the appropriate time.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your informative statement and the kind words addressed to the new Bureau. The next speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of Sweden.

Mr. A. WERNHOFF (Sweden): First of all, I would like to convey my delegation's sincere congratulations to you as the new Chairman of the

Committee. May I take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador González and Professor Kabbaj on their election as First Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur, respectively. My delegation is pleased to see Professor Rex and Mr. Mikulka re-elected as Chairmen of the Scientific and Technical and Legal Subcommittees. Through the Chair, I would like to forward my delegation's sincere appreciation for the work done by the former Bureau of the Committee, Ambassador Hohenfellner, Mr. Mazilu and Mr. Telles Ribeiro.

We are equally indebted to the dedicated work of Dr. Jasentuliyana and the staff of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, and especially the Expert on Space Applications, Dr. Abiodun. Sweden takes great pleasure in cooperating with the Secretariat through our close association with the Programme on Space Applications. There has been a particularly successful series of international training courses on remote sensing education for educators, jointly organized by Sweden and the United Nations. The seventh such course, hosted by the Department of Physical Geography of Stockholm University and the Swedish Space Corporation, is currently being held in Stockholm and Kiruna.

My delegation would like to stress the importance it attaches to the work of COPUOS and its Subcommittees. These bodies are invaluable forums for scientific, technical and legal deliberations, and exchange of information and experiences on current space activities at the international level. Over the last 12 months Ambassador Hohenfellner has carried out informal consultations in order to render more effective the working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies. We welcome the agreement that has been reached, and believe that the framework outlined in the Chairman's package proposal will help to strengthen and revitalize our Committee. My delegation would like to thank Ambassador Hohenfellner for the dedicated work he has carried out to finalize this agreement. Concerning the duration of sessions, my delegation feels that the proposal to institute a new meeting pattern, which should total 5½ weeks each year, represents a good first step in the process of creating more streamlined and cost-effective working practices.

The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee continued its consideration of the agenda item on space debris as a priority. My delegation notes with satisfaction the process outlined in the multi-year workplan, with special attention focused this year on modelling the space debris environment and risk assessment. Cooperation with the IADC is promising, and we are grateful that the technical expertise of the IADC is made available to the Subcommittee. Our thanks go to the Secretariat for preparing a report on various steps taken by space agencies to reduce the growth or potential damage of space debris. These efforts, together with an annually updated report by the Subcommittee, constitute a sound basis for the finalization of the Subcommittee's report on space debris in 1999.

An item of major importance in our deliberations this year will be further preparations for UNISPACE III. Considerable progress has already been achieved in the Working Group within the Subcommittee, and my delegation welcomes the special attention paid to the role of space science and technology in relation to the environment. Earth observation applications, as well as competence building, can make a significant contribution to the pursuit of sustainable development.

As concerns the work of the Legal Subcommittee, my delegation would like to mention three matters. Firstly, we note with appreciation the adoption by the General Assembly of the "Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interests of all States, taking into particular account the Needs of Developing Countries". Secondly, we welcome the working paper submitted by Germany this year on agenda item 4. The proposed draft resolution – whereby the issue of equitable access to the geostationary satellite orbit/radiofrequency spectrum resources should be dealt with by the ITU – constitutes a constructive and creative way to deal with this topic. Consideration of this item in the Legal Subcommittee could then be deferred until the year 2000, after UNISPACE III.

Lastly, my delegation notes with interest the decision of the Legal Subcommittee to recommend inclusion of a new item on its agenda. The proposal submitted by Mexico, "Review of the status of the five international treaties governing outer space", could well constitute a good basis for discussion of the different aspects related to the implementation of these instruments. It is our understanding that this initiative should not lead to reopening of substantive debate on the treaties, or any proposals for their revision or amendment.

This year, COPUOS celebrates its fortieth session; the Outer Space Treaty also celebrates its thirtieth anniversary. Therefore 1997 represents another historical year for the Committee. It is our common responsibility to rise to the occasion, meet expectations and pave the way for future global cooperation in outer space affairs.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your report and your kind wishes expressed to the new members of the Bureau. The next speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of Spain.

Mr. A. ORTIZ GARCIA (Spain) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: My delegation would like to express its warmest congratulations to the new Bureau and to wish them every success during the three years in which they will preside over the work of the Committee. In particular we would like to express our appreciation to Ambassador Hohenfellner for all his work as former Chairman of the Committee. We welcome you as our new Chairman, as well as Ambassador González, whom we know very well, and Professor Kabbaj from Morocco, a neighbour of Spain.

I will focus my statement on three points of major interest, which are included on the Committee's agenda. The first refers to the election of the new Bureau and the working methods of the Committee. My delegation believes that the new system of election and the consequent rebuilding of the Committee is of great importance in revitalizing the Committee. COPUOS, which came into being during a time of confrontation and the cold war, reached a delicate political agreement with the previous system of chairmanships. Now we have moved away from confrontation to cooperation, and it is therefore logical that COPUOS should bring itself into line as concerns its composition with other United Nations bodies by electing its officers in accordance with appropriate geographic rotation.

As concerns working methods, my delegation considers that we have made positive progress, including the replacement of summary records by unedited verbatim transcripts, and the adaptation of the length of meetings of the Committee and its Subcommittees in line with the burden of work. We have progressed, but we must not lose this impetus and must continue in the same manner. My delegation has always maintained that COPUOS should be reformed with the full participation of Member States, and not by those from outside the Committee. We therefore hope these innovations will continue, thus ensuring that COPUOS becomes the pioneering committee for reform and a reference point within the United Nations system.

My delegation accords special importance to UNISPACE III, which requires careful organization. It must be focused on specific points rather than general theoretical speeches. UNISPACE III will thus represent a landmark in international United Nations conferences with a new, more practical and useful format, unlike some conferences in the past which were unfocused in terms of their organization, length and objectives. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, the Committee itself and the Secretariat must focus their efforts on this task when making preparations for the Conference, and not waste time on items which have been on the agenda for many years and are of lower priority.

My delegation also attaches great importance to the participation of international space agencies and private industry in UNISPACE III. These bodies can introduce new visions and make an important contribution to the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. Spain is ready to cooperate enthusiastically to ensure that the Conference is a success.

Finally, I would like to refer to item 10 of our agenda, "Spin-off benefits of space technology: Review of current status". In this connection, I am pleased to announce that the Spanish mini-satellite MINISAT-01 was successfully launched from Spain on 21 April 1997, using a Pegasus rocket from a Lockheed L-1011 aircraft, flying at an altitude of 11,000 metres over the south of Gran Canaria, at 11.59 GMT. MINISAT-01 is a hexagonal shape, 1 metre wide and 1½ metres long, weighing 200 kilos, and is now in orbit at an altitude of some 600 km; the planned scientific experiments have been initiated and are being carried out. My delegation hopes that the Spanish National Aerospace Technology Institute, which designed and built the mini-satellite, will make a brief statement on this launching under the appropriate agenda item, as we hope it will prove of interest for other delegations.

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that the outcome of our meetings will be successful. Peace is a gift from heaven, and we trust that outer space, which from our childhood days we always said was in the heavens above, may contribute to peace between peoples and allow us to share the benefits of space research.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your statement and for the kind congratulatory words addressed to the new Bureau. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Ukraine.

Mr. E. KUZNETSOV (Ukraine) (*interpretation from Russian*): My delegation would like to extend our best wishes for the success of the fortieth session of COPUOS. We are sure that the work of this Committee at the current session will provide a useful basis to serve the welfare of all mankind.

My delegation would like to congratulate Professor Rao, Ambassador González and Professor Kabbaj upon their election to the new Bureau. We are convinced that under the new Bureau, our work will be given new impetus so that it is more concentrated, more effective, and will produce good results.

The following developments have taken place in the Ukraine in the field of outer space activities. This year we have concluded the first Ukraine outer space programme, thanks to which the development of this sector has been very successful. More than 100 organizations and scientific institutes have been working in this area, and an institute has been created which brings together the main enterprises involved in outer space technology. A ground infrastructure complementing the spectrum of outer space programmes for the Ukraine and other countries has been formed, and a successful [transport system?] for outer space activities has also been developed.

Over the past five years, 43 missiles such as [Cyclone?] have been launched; a wide-ranging programme for Sich, including the centre for the management, collection and processing of information on outer space activities, as well as the launching of Sich-1, took place in 1995, and another launch is planned for 1998.

Our national legislation concerning activities in outer space has been drawn up, and a package of legal standard-setting norms to regulate outer space activity has been adopted. We hope that a Ukrainian researcher/cosmonaut will soon be flying with a United States crew on board the spacecraft Columbia. According to an agreement made with colleagues at NASA, he will perform a series of experiments on board the shuttle relating to botanics and biology. We are working successfully with other States on joint programmes of scientific research, such as Mars, Spectre, Alert, GLOBALSTAR, etc. Work is being carried out according to some 100 international contracts in the space sector.

At the threshold of the new millennium, the main thrust of Ukraine outer space activities to the year 2010 has been developed. In the new outer space programme, nine spacecraft are scheduled to be launched between now and 2002. Two remote sensing satellites will also be launched, as well as three scientific satellites and three micro-satellites. In cooperation with the Russian Federation we have worked on the conversion of strategic missiles, such as the CC-18, converting them into civilian commercial launchers and actively developing a whole series of outer space micro-satellites.

The President of the Ukraine recently announced that by the year 2000, there will be a total demilitarization of the structure which services our outer space agency activities. The Ukraine has always tried to develop all its technologies in line with world-wide systems, so that it can be used by other States and individuals. For example, in the C-START programme, one of the most advanced [automatic start prepared environmentally clean?] launch vehicles, the Zenith, will be prepared in joint collaboration with the Russian Federation, and will be developed by United States and Norwegian companies.

The Ukraine has a national centre for the management and testing of outer space resources, which we propose should be the centre for international coordination of outer space activities. Special emphasis will be given to the exploitation of outer space in the interests of users. My delegation believes that outer space activities should be as transparent and open as possible and should enhance the quality of life for all. This programme will be linked closely with programmes of other countries, and with project which fall under the aegis of the United Nations. Ukrainian researchers are playing a responsible role in the Alert project, and are working closely with colleagues on Earth remote sensing programmes.

Unfortunately, having declared our intention to collaborate with the United Nations on a programme on the threshold of the third millennium, we have encountered certain financial difficulties in that regard. We appreciate the great efforts involved in the preparations for UNISPACE III and we will therefore have to review the timing of this work, which might now be scheduled for May 2000.

My delegation reiterates its satisfaction to see you in the Chair of this meeting, and hopes that developments in space will meet with success. We will thus be able to enhance the quality of life on Earth, as well as to enhance our awareness of the internationality of difficulties encountered and their relation with outer space. Work carried out by both researchers and engineers will help to promote the welfare of all mankind, which will enhance cooperation on a global scale.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your statement and for your kind words addressed to the new Bureau. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Ecuador.

Mr. L. ARIZAGA (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Firstly, my delegation wishes to congratulate Ambassador Hohenfellner on the achievements made by this Committee under his chairmanship. Although at times there were some differences and divergencies of opinion on certain items, the overall results of the past few years have been positive. We would also like to congratulate the new members of the Bureau; we are pleased to see the distinguished representatives of India, Chile and Morocco, all developing countries, leading the work of this Committee.

My delegation fully endorses the statement made by the ambassador of Brazil, as Chairman of the Group of 77, and by the ambassador of Bolivia, as Chairman of GRULAC.

As concerns UNISPACE III, my delegation believes it is important that the Conference is properly prepared with the active participation of all involved, and thus achieve results which will be of benefit to all countries, and especially the developing countries. Joint efforts must be made to ensure the success of the Conference, and that the outcome will be relevant in the short term. My country is particularly interested in the holding of the regional conference, which will make it possible for our region to make proper preparations for UNISPACE III. At the regional conference, the Office for Outer Space Affairs must play a major support role. Ecuador is pleased to note the agreement reached by Brazil and Mexico for the establishment of the regional centre for space science and technology education. We are convinced that this centre will strengthen the national programmes of the countries in our region.

My delegation would like to recall the achievements of this Committee as concerns its working methods, namely the agreement on the composition of the Bureau, the structure of the agenda and the duration of sessions. The new working methods will make it possible to address agenda items in a positive way and to identify clear parameters of work for the years to come. With regard to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, my delegation endorses the statement of the Chairman of GRULAC and believes it is important that the relevant Principles are strictly complied with.

My delegation will speak at a later stage on the subject of the geostationary orbit.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your statement and for your kind words addressed to the new members of the Bureau. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Argentina.

Ms. C. LOPEZ MONJA (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation would like to express its appreciation for the work carried out by the members of the outgoing Bureau. I will not refer here to the many achievements under the chairmanship of Ambassador Hohenfellner, but I would like to emphasize the patient, constant and flexible efforts made in addressing the new working methods of COPUOS. That work has resulted in the composition of a new Bureau on the basis of equitable geographical representation. I would like to endorse statements made by other distinguished delegations to wish every success, and give the full support of my delegation, to the leading roles to be played by Professor Rao, Ambassador González and Professor Kabbaj.

My delegation welcomes the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-fourth session. We greatly value the presentations in the field of space debris and the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. The seminar on space systems for direct TV and radio broadcasting and world information systems for space research was of particular interest. As concerns the Legal Subcommittee, my delegation welcomes the addition of a new agenda item proposed by Mexico, "Review of the status of the five international legal instruments governing outer space".

My delegation hopes that work will continue on studying the scientific and technical aspects of the use of nuclear power sources, so that this subject may be referred to the Legal Subcommittee. With regard to the definition and delimitation of the geostationary orbit, my delegation urges Member States to reply to the questionnaire. In addition, without prejudice to a more detailed analysis of the proposed declaration by Germany, we hope that this item will not be deleted from the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee.

Recent years have seen unbelievable and unprecedented changes on the international political stage. In the domain of space activities, this has produced a transition from the concept of confrontation to a situation of broad and flourishing international cooperation among both the developed and developing countries. However, much still remains to be done. Within that framework, where resources are limited but needs are great, my delegation believes that cooperation will produce the most visible results and concrete applications.

UNISPACE III will provide an appropriate framework for countries with fewer resources but similar needs for satellite information to clearly identify their priorities. Possibilities for undertaking joint projects will

also be highlighted. My delegation hopes there will be great interest and support from the most developed space-faring nations to participate in such enterprises for the benefit of all.

My delegation expresses its satisfaction at the signing of the agreement by Brazil and Mexico for the establishment of the regional centre for space science and technology education. We would reiterate that we are at their disposal to coordinate the training of experts on a complementary basis in accordance with our respective space plans in order to promote future joint activities.

The global situation has changed and has resulted in substantive transformations in the international agenda. Space activities must likewise be adjusted, and in this post-cold war era we believe that two fundamental pillars must cement this new stage: international cooperation, and the training of experts. These two elements will help to ensure that the benefits of the exploration and exploitation of outer space will not be a privilege of the few but an asset to be shared by all mankind.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your statement and for your best wishes to the new members of the Bureau. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom.

Mr. TREMAYNE-SMITH (United Kingdom): May I add my delegation's welcome to you and the other new members of the Bureau. My delegation looks forward to further innovations in the working methods of this Committee under your chairmanship. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the former Chairman for his sterling service to the Committee and his good stewardship, which has helped to strengthen our position in proceeding with the work before us. The detailed discussion on our working methods have put us where we are today: at the start of a period of major change that will lead to further increases in efficiency of the Committee and its Subcommittees.

My delegation supports the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in preparing the ground work for UNISPACE III, and trusts that the work carried out will be of substantial support to the Preparatory Committee. In addition, my delegation welcomes the progress made on space debris in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, and the depth and breadth of the discussions. However, it is important to translate all this work into activity, and into improved working practices by all users of outer space. Such activity will enable the current utilization of space to continue, as well as allowing for new uses of outer space, which should be carried out in a sustainable manner.

As concerns the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, my delegation welcomes the conclusion of the working group that further discussion is necessary in the Subcommittee. My delegation is pleased at the agreement reached in the Chairman's package proposal as it affects the Legal Subcommittee, as well as the reduction in duration of meetings achieved by the Subcommittee this year.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your kind words and for your statement. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Mexico.

Mr. V. ARRIAGA WEISS (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation expresses its satisfaction at seeing you presiding over the work of our Committee, and would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their well-deserved election. We wish to thank the Austrian delegation for its support for the Committee's activities and for the decisive role which it played in identifying a solution for the substantive issues affecting the work of COPUOS and its Subcommittees.

My delegation welcomes the agreement reached yesterday on the organization of work and composition of the Bureau. We hope that that agreement will have a positive impact on the revitalization of the Committee's work.

Regarding the work of this session of the Committee, my delegation has several points to raise. Firstly, as concerns progress on the establishment of a regional centre for space science and technology education for Latin America and the Caribbean, on 11 March 1997 the Governments of Mexico and Brazil signed the agreement to establish that centre. My country's senate ratified the agreement on 29 April and the Government thus completed the necessary formal procedures for its adoption.

My delegation emphasizes the importance it attaches to keeping the subject of the geostationary orbit on the Legal Subcommittee's agenda. We believe that the ITU and COPUOS must both play a role in the solution of problems relating to the use and exploitation of that orbit. Coordination and ongoing consultations must take place between the two; the use and exploitation of the geostationary orbit can only be resolved it is addressed from different viewpoints. It is for COPUOS to monitor compliance with the Principles on the use of outer space

for peaceful purposes, and therefore this agenda item must not be deleted. Consideration of this subject does fall within the ambit of COPUOS and the mandate of its two Subcommittees.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to express its satisfaction at the results of the informal consultations in the Legal Subcommittee concerning the addition of a new agenda item. In particular, the recommendation to include the item "Review of the status of the five international treaties governing outer space" will make it possible to support the legal regime of outer space. It will also contribute to greater adherence to the five outer space treaties. My delegation looks forward to the strengthening of the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee at its next session.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your kind words and for your statement. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Malaysia.

Ms. M. OTHMAN (Malaysia): I would like to join previous speakers in heartily congratulating you and the other new members of the Bureau. My delegation offers you its fullest cooperation from this our first year of participation in the Committee. My delegation would also like to express our sincere appreciation to Ambassador Hohenfellner for his wise and skillful guidance in the work of the Committee, and especially its reform process.

Malaysia has actively monitored the work of this Committee for several years, mainly through the good offices of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, and we have closely followed global events in space affairs. We have been using remote sensing data for nearly 20 years. In 1995 we launched our first telecommunication satellite into the geostationary orbit, [Myasat-1?], which was privately funded; this was followed by [Myasat-2?] in 1996. We are now building our first microsatellite for a planned launch in late-1997 or early-1998. Its main objective is the development of indigenous capability in satellite technology.

Malaysia adopts an open position in matters relating to space; we have already embarked upon various collaborative programmes with Brazil, Canada, India, Russia, South Africa, United Kingdom and the United States. My delegation believes that the wide range of technological advances and expertise available in these countries, as well as the differences in ideology, will assist Malaysia in determining its own vision and direction in space. We hope to expand this cooperation in the future.

Through our membership of COPUOS Malaysia hopes to contribute actively to the Committee's important work in guiding mankind's destiny in space, and in bringing the developing countries into the fold of the space-faring nations of the world. We look forward to speaking on other subjects later during the session.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your statement and your kind words to the members of the Bureau. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Pakistan.

Mr. M. NASIM SHAH (Pakistan): My delegation joins the other distinguished representatives in extending our warmest congratulations to you on your election to the high office of Chairman of this Committee, as well as to the other newly elected members of the Bureau. With your experience, we are sure that the current session will be successful in achieving its objectives, and we assure you of your fullest cooperation.

My delegation notes with appreciation the work carried out by the two Subcommittees of COPUOS, under the chairmanship of Professor Rex and Mr. Mikulka. Substantial progress has been made in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in preparing its recommendations, as Advisory Committee, for the holding of UNISPACE III, in the light of the guidelines laid down by the Committee. These recommendations are quite comprehensive and cover most of the relevant aspects, for which the Chairman of that Subcommittee deserves our thanks. My delegation will speak in greater detail on this item when it is taken up by the Committee.

The Legal Subcommittee has, in a comparatively short time, produced a new item for inclusion on its agenda as from its 1998 session. My delegation urges delegates to consider the specific proposals already made for possible additional new items for the Subcommittee's agenda.

Several years ago the General Assembly requested COPUOS to consider new projects in the field of outer space. In 1985, through its resolution 40/162, the General Assembly had requested COPUOS:

> "to continue its work in accordance with the present resolution, to consider as appropriate new projects in outer space activities and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its 41st Session, including its views on which subjects should be studied in the future".

This request has been repeated year after year, and yet again in General Assembly resolution 51/123 (paragraph 39):

> "[The General Assembly] requests the Committee to continue its work, in accordance with the present resolution, to consider, as appropriate, new projects in outer space activities, and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its 52nd Session, including its views on which subjects should be studied in the future".

From the above it is interesting to note that the General Assembly has requested this Committee to consider new projects, a subject which, as far as my delegation is aware, has never been taken up in the past. Neither has this item been included in the provisional agenda for the fortieth session of our Committee. My delegation would therefore like to draw the Committee's attention to the lack of appropriate attention to this topic, and would like to see more emphasis placed on consideration of new projects, bearing in mind their relevance to the concerns and needs of the developing countries.

My delegation appreciates the organisation of the symposia by COSPAR and the IAF at the annual sessions of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. Through these symposia, delegates are able to obtain state-of-the-art information on developments covering various areas of space science and technology. This is of particular benefit to the developing countries in formulating their national and joint space programmes, and we hope these symposia will continue to take place.

My delegation is pleased to announce that in line with continuing regional activities for cooperation in space technology and its applications, the fourth Asia-Pacific Conference on Multilateral Cooperation in Space Technology and Applications is schedule to be held in Bahrain from 1 to 4 December 1997. This will provide an excellent forum for various agencies and institutions, as well as individual experts and policy- and decision-makers, to exchange views on the development of bilateral and multilateral cooperative activities in space science, space technology and their applications in the Asia-Pacific region.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your statement and for some thought-provoking ideas contained therein, as well as your kind words addressed to the new members of the Bureau. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Inmarsat.

Mr. D. SAGAR (Observer, International Mobile Satellite Organization (Inmarsat)): Inmarsat welcomes the opportunity of addressing this session and of bringing the Committee up to date on recent developments in Inmarsat's global system and services, as well as some current programmes which may be of interest. Our published statement gives more details, but I will summarize some of the more relevant aspects of it.

As far as Inmarsat's present global system is concerned, we are in the course of launching a third generation of satellites which will be much more powerful than previous ones. They will use spot beam technology and provide enhanced capacity for voice and data communications to small mobile terminals on ships, aircraft and vehicles. They also provide a more efficient use of the spectrum, and by mid-1998 we hope that a total of nine satellites will form our space segment constellation, covering all areas of the world apart from the polar regions.

Turning to our current services portfolio, Inmarsat's original mandate to serve the maritime community has now evolved into the sole global provider of satellite communications at sea, in the air and on land. Our system supports telephony, telefax, electronic mail and various other applications including navigation and two-way paging, and is currently used on board some 41,000 ships, including both large and smaller fishing vessels. It is particularly significant that the use of Inmarsat is expressly authorized by the International Maritime Organization to satisfy mandatory ship radio carriage requirements for safety of life at sea.

Some 2,000 commercial and corporate aircraft use the system for passenger and operational communications. By the end of this decade, Inmarsat is expected to become the basis of transoceanic air traffic control. On land, the most rapidly growing area of Inmarsat's services, approximatelz 30,000 terminals have been commissioned. They are used for various applications, particularly by land transport fleet operators, as well as by agencies and travellers operating in remote areas.

Disasters and emergencies are of special significance. In this domain, the Inmarsat system has been used many times related to natural disaster, where other communication systems have broken down and there is no alternative available. The disaster relief agencies and news broadcasters have therefore used the system extensively. In this context, Inmarsat has a policy of free use of the system for our signatories, and we cooperate with the United Nations and other agencies concerned with disaster relief.

A recent evolution of Inmarsat has been the development of smaller and less expensive terminals, in particular the Inmarsat telephone. This is a digital telephone with fax and data capabilities; its terminals are now smaller than a laptop, it weighs a mere 2 kilos and is as easy to carry as hand-held cellular mobile phones. It can therefore easily be carried by hand to remote sites and be quickly deployed by untrained personnel.

Other innovations are the provision of navigation services, at present through transponders on board the third generation satellites which provide monitoring and integrity signals to enhance the position accuracy of the United States Global Position System, and the Russian [Glonas?] system. Inmarsat is considering its fourth generation of products and services for new markets such as broadband, navigation, broadcast, multimedia, and rural and remote communications.

Turning to some regional developments, particular stress has been laid upon regionalism by Inmarsat over recent years. It has established a permanent office in Beijing and regional directors have been appointed to cover nearly all geographical areas. Inmarsat's programme of cooperation with developing countries provides an opportunity for training courses in satellite communications. Pilot projects have been established to demonstrate the benefits of Inmarsat, such as the use of payphones in rural and remote areas, and data terminals capable of handling different languages.

In common with the other intergovernmental satellite operators, Intelsat and Eutelsat, we have been reviewing our institutional and business structures to cope with the changes which have taken place since these organizations were initially established. Examples include the privatization of national telecommunications operators and the appearance of competing systems. Inmarsat members have acknowledged that a more efficient corporate structure is necessary. Over the past two or three years, consideration has been given to the transfer of business to a national registered company with a fiduciary board of directors, and access to external capital. Under that model it would nevertheless remain subject to oversight by the Inmarsat Assembly of Parties on important basic principles, namely the maintenance of maritime distress and safety services, non-discriminatory access to services, service to all geographical areas where there is a need for mobile communications, peaceful purposes, and fair competition. Meetings which will address these subjects are continuing this year, and as yet no decisions have been taken.

Turning briefly to regulatory issues, Inmarsat has been faced with the problem of regulatory barriers to transborder use of its systems. Technically it is possible to use satellite communications throughout the world, but many countries do restrict access for economic, security and other reasons, thus preventing the effective and rapid deployment of mobile satellite services when there are often no alternatives, and denying those countries a powerful engine of economic growth.

Inmarsat has been in the forefront of the campaign to persuade national authorities to dismantle such barriers and also cooperates with the ITU and the WTO on recent initiatives taken by those bodies – for example, agreement on a Memorandum of Understanding on the circulation of global mobile personal communications by satellite. Those activities are currently in progress and will actively continue.

A matter which relates more to the Legal Subcommittee concerns peaceful purposes; under our Convention, Inmarsat is required to act exclusively for peaceful purposes. Over the years we have received many requests to equip naval, armed forces and other law enforcement agencies, including United Nations peace-keeping forces, with satellite terminals. After a thorough legal analysis, in practice Inmarsat has interpreted the peaceful purposes requirement to mean that a ship involved in armed conflict could not use the system, other than for distress, safety or other humanitarian purposes. However, use of the system would be permitted by peace-keeping forces acting under the auspices of the United Nations Security Council, even if engaged in armed conflict to accomplish their mission. Use for legitimate individual or collective self-defence against armed attack, consistent with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, is also allowed.

As concerns further developments, Inmarsat's membership reached 80 this year, and we are continuing to urge States to join. The system is available to all countries, whether members or not, on a non-discriminatory basis. With respect to our cooperation with this Committee, we have a specific institutional obligation to cooperate with COPUOS and have been privileged to do so throughout our existence during the 1980s and 1990s. Currently the system responds to many of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82, such as the development of smaller terminals, the availability of services in developing countries and rural communities, search and rescue purposes, and for international navigation.

Inmarsat has been happy to cooperate closely with the Programme on Space Applications and looks forward to future cooperation in that respect. Inmarsat was an active participant in UNISPACE 82 and will follow the preparations for UNISPACE III with great interest.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your informative statement. The next speaker is the distinguished representative of the European Space Agency.

Mr. G. GIAMPALMO (Observer, European Space Agency): I would like to express my appreciation at the opportunity to participate in this Committee on behalf of ESA, and I would like to thank Dr. Jasentuliyana for his kind words and welcome. ESA congratulates the new members of the Bureau on your election and wishes you every success.

Turning to the agenda of the Committee, I would like to recall the many areas in which ESA plays an important role, as well as some highlights of the main events of the past year. As concerns space debris, ESA attaches considerable importance to this issue, and participates actively in the world of the IDAC (?IADC), in which specialists from space-faring nations discuss the technical aspects of space debris. Within this framework ESA organized a major conference in Darmstadt (Germany), at the ESA establishment ESOC. Entitled "The Second European Conference on Space Debris", this Conference was a great success; over 100 papers were presented, as well as 40 posters. Some 200 specialists attended the event. As you know, the ESA expert also follows closely the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on this important subject.

After accomplishing its mission, ESA's Earth observation satellite ERS-1 has been de-activated, but can still be reactivated for special missions. Meanwhile ERS-2 continues to acquire radar data. ESA is also preparing for the next generation of Earth observation satellites, ENVISAT, at present under development for launch in 1999. ENVISAT missions are under definition at present and consist of two types: one is more application-oriented (Earth Watch) and another more science-oriented (Earth Explorer).

ESA has been continuing its work on the next generation of European launchers. After the failure last year of the first test flight of our new launcher Ariane 5, the Agency, together with its industrial partners, has made a great joint effort and the next qualification launch will take place in September 1997.

I am pleased to report on the determination of our Member States to carry out the Scientific Programme CLUSTER. You may recall that the satellites developed by ESA were lost in the launch failure of Ariane 5 one year ago, but The CLUSTER satellite will be developed and launched again. The mission has been designed primarily to study the three-dimensional shape and dynamics behaviour of small-scale structures in the Earth's plasma environment.

In the field of telecommunications, ESA is developing the Artemis satellite, a data relay satellite which is being developed for testing and operating new, innovative telecommunications techniques, in particular optical inter-satellite links. This programme is being developed in close collaboration with the Japanese NASDA. Together with the European Commission and the European Civil Aviation Authorities (EUROCONTROL), ESA has created a tripartite group which will develop Europe's Global Navigation System Satellite in close cooperation with national entities outside of ESA member countries.

In the area of manned spaceflights, ESA continues its preparation for participation in the International Space Station through the flights of European astronauts to the Russian Mir station. The negotiations for the appropriate international agreement are complete, and those for the Memorandum of Understanding between NASA and other agencies are nearing conclusion; it is hoped that ESA Member States, the United States, Russia, Japan, Canada and their respective agencies will sign the Space Station Agreement in the second half of 1997, thus marking the formal commencement of the most ambitious international technical and scientific cooperation programme.

From the above, the Committee can see that ESA is continuing with its programmes in developing space technologies of the future together, and jointly, with many countries here present. Looking to the work of the Committee as concerns UNISPACE III, the United Kingdom delegation presented a document to the meeting of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee held in February 1997. This document was coordinated by ESA with the support of all its Member States.

I would like to close by wishing you, the Vice-Chairman and the Rapporteur every success in presiding over this important Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your statement and best wishes. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the International Law Association.

Mr. K. BÖCKSTIEGEL (Observer, International Law Association): On behalf of the ILA, I would like to convey to you and your colleagues in the new Bureau of the Committee our congratulations on your election, and our best wishes for your future work.

For the benefit of those delegates and observers who have not attended the sessions of this Committee in recent years, I will present a basic outline of the Association. The ILA was founded in 1873, since which time it has always been a non-governmental organization of academics and practitioners in the field of international law. The ILA has national branches in all corners of the world, with its headquarters in London. Its work is presented and formalized at bi-annual conferences held in different venues worldwide, the last two having been held in Buenos Aires and Helsinki.

Between the holding of these conference, the work is carried out in large part by committees which are established for the various fields of public and private international law. One such committee is the ILA Space Law Committee, which I have the honour to chair. Its Rapporteur is Professor Williams, of Argentina, and its members are distinguished specialists in the field, many of whom are well known to the members of COPUOS and its Legal Subcommittee. For further information on the ILA and its work regarding space law, reference may be made to the recent United Nations publication "Space activities of the United Nations and international organizations" (document A/AC.105/521), as well as to the ILA conference reports which are published after every ILA conference in book form.

The work of the ILA Space Law Committee has focused in recent years on the protection of the environment of Earth and of space in relation to space activities, in particular the issue of space debris. I am therefore pleased to note the progress which has been achieved in COPUOS on these subjects. A particular milestone is marked by the fact that at its 1994 session, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee included the issue of space debris on its agenda and discussed this topic at considerable length. In its sessions between 1994 and the present, the Subcommittee treated the question of space debris as a priority agenda item and adopted a multi-year plan for its work. The ILA notes with pleasure that the 1997 session of the Subcommittee made good progress in implementing the multi-year plan, in particular in concentrating on the modelling of the space debris environment and risk assessment, as well as current operational debris mitigation practices with a view to developing cost-effective mitigation methods.

Mr. Chairman, you most convincingly stressed the importance of the issue of space debris in your introductory statement to the Committee yesterday. In the context of the multi-year plan, the ILA will make every effort to assist in work on this topic. We note, however, that there is still some hesitation in the Legal Subcommittee to take up substantial discussions on space debris in the foreseeable future, despite the suggestion of several delegations at its 1997 session to open such discussions. The ILA feels that exchange of information on that agenda item should take place between the two Subcommittees: any discussion in the Legal Subcommittee obviously needs to be based on scientific and technical information available in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. Equally, for long-term progress to be achieved, the option of adopting an international instrument must be taken into account in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee; the specific expertise of the Legal Subcommittee can obviously make an important contribution in that regard. This process could be followed irrespective of whether the instrument in question is a mere code of conduct, a more formal text, or a binding legal instrument. A general topic along the lines of "Legal aspects of space debris" would be without prejudice to the outcome of such discussions.

In addition to the text of my statement, I would like to add that the ILA endorses the progress achieved by the adoption (by consensus) of the Chairman's package proposal. You will recall that the agreed agenda structures include consideration by the Legal Subcommittee of the possible inclusion of new items on "Comparison of the norms of space law and those of international environmental law", and "Review of existing norms of international law applicable to space debris". The ILA believes that these two interrelated items could form the basis of an extremely interesting discussion and would provide valuable assistance to the work of COPUOS.

As concerns space debris and the environment, I will give you a brief progress report on the ILA's work in this field. Pursuant to a decision taken at the ILA Conference which took place in Seoul in 1996, the ILA Space Law Committee has been conducting research and exchanging information and views, and has subsequently prepared draft documents on the protection of the environment from damage caused by space activities, particularly space debris. During this process, the legal experts in the Space Law Committee have had the benefit of support from three scientific consultants, namely Professor Lubos Perek (Czech Republic), Professor Dieter Rex (Germany) and Mr. Umberto [Ricciardi?] (Argentina). The ILA is delighted to note that one of

them, Professor Rex, has been re-elected as Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

Landmarks of ILA's work on space debris were a regional seminar of the ILA in Buenos Aires, held in 1987; the international colloquium at the Institute of Air and Space Law in Cologne, in 1988, with special emphasis on the interdisciplinary aspects of the issue, which resulted in a book; discussions and a further mandate of the ILA Conference in Warsaw in 1988; a meeting in Asunción (Paraguay) in October 1988; a report to the 1990 ILA Conference in Australia, which resulted in a mandate to the Space Law Committee to start work on the elaboration of relevant principles; following the preparation of three drafts, a report to the 1992 ILA Conference, which resulted in a mandate to prepare a draft final text for an international instrument.

After long and extensive preparations since 1992, three drafts have been elaborated, circulated and discussed on various occasions by the ILA Space Law Committee and the final text, entitled "International instrument on the protection of the environment from damage caused by space debris", was submitted with an extensive commentary by the Rapporteur to the 66th ILA Conference, held in Buenos Aires in 1994. The Conference adopted it in a formal resolution, the text of which is attached, together with the text of the instrument, to the written version of my statement as distributed at this meeting.

Major provisions of this final text deal with: definitions, scope of application; the general obligation to cooperate; obligations to prevent, inform, consult and negotiate in good faith; compatibility with other agreements; responsibility and liability; dispute settlement; and the standard provisions on formalities of an international instrument. As many delegations are aware, a symposium was held in connection with the 1995 meeting of the Legal Subcommittee of COPUOS, where it was again suggested that the Subcommittee take up the topic of space debris on its agenda. It was felt that the ILA document might be a good starting point for such discussion, even if all that was presently contemplated was a code of conduct.

In addition to adopting the draft instrument on space debris, the Buenos Aires resolution requested the ILA Space Law Committee to re-examine the 1984 ILA Draft Convention on the Settlement of Space Law Dispute to determine whether developments since 1984 necessitate any changes or the elaboration of a new instrument. In that same context it was requested to examine what further steps could be taken to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes regarding space activities. This examination is already under way in the ILA Space Committee, and it has been established that the growing use of outer space, particularly the rapid increase in commercial space applications, leads to demand for a widely available, fast, efficient and acceptable framework for the settlement of disputes regarding space activities.

It is no mere coincidence that the International Court of Justice, when celebrating its fiftieth anniversary last year, held a special session on "Equipping the Court to deal with Developing Areas of International Law", selected "Space Law" as such a developing area, and asked me to make the main presentation on that item. The exchange of views during this meeting at The Hague were taken into account in the further work of the ILA Space Law Committee when a progress report was presented to the ILA Conference in Helsinki last year. On the basis of the discussion and the mandate given by a resolution in Helsinki, the ILA Space Law Committee is currently preparing a report, and a final text for a proposed draft instrument to be adopted at the 1998 ILA Conference. The resolution of the Helsinki Conference is also attached to my statement as distributed.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm the readiness of the International Law Association to support the work of this Committee as well as its Legal Subcommittee.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your detailed statement. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Intersputnik.

Mr. V. VESHCHUNOV (Observer, International Organization of Space Communications (Intersputnik)): My organization offers you sincere congratulations on your election to the responsible position as Chairman of this Committee; I would also like to congratulate the members of the Bureau and wish them every success in their important work.

I am honoured to address this distinguished audience and tell you something of the present status and future plans of my Organization. Intersputnik, which was established in 1971, has 22 Member States and operates communication satellites deployed in the geostationary orbit over an arc extending from 14° West to 161° East.

It is no secret that initially Intersputnik had a limited membership, and its constituency was politically motivated. Today, Intersputnik is a well-known global operator on the satellite communication services market.

However, the changes that are taking place, especially the new trends in global telecommunication market development, are setting new challenges for Intersputnik, among which the most important is to satisfy the growing demands of our customers in communication services and the expansion of the organization's business.

The Intersputnik Board recently adopted a brand new concept of procurement of new-generation communications satellites in cooperation with potential investors. The establishment of a new joint venture is the logical result of Intersputnik's two years of work to expand its organizational structure and technological base for new prospective satellites. This venture will be a suitable response to the challenge of the rapidly changing market environment reflected in new developments among the leading international satellite organizations – for example, Inmarsat, Intelsat and Eutelsat.

The result of these developments has helped to influence Intersputnik in its decision to establish an ambitious joint venture with the Lockheed Martin Corporation. The new venture will cover the entire technological cycle of satellite communications, from manufacture and launch to operation. A Memorandum of Understanding and Joint Venture Formation Agreement have already been signed, and Intersputnik's major contribution to the new company is its wealth of experience in the operation of satellite systems.

Twenty-five years of successful work on the international telecommunications market has allowed Intersputnik to create a global Earth station network for operation in the system, and to establish solid relations with more than 100 States and private companies all over the world who use the communication services provided by Intersputnik.

The launch of the first Lockheed Martin Intersputnik series satellite foreseen for late 1998, to the 75° East slot, will encourage further development of Intersputnik's present network, and create the possibility of building new networks in the dynamically developing regions of Eastern Europe, South and South-East Asia, the CIS, Middle East and Africa. In accordance with the basic principles of the Joint Venture Formation Agreement, Intersputnik will be the primary operator of the first satellite. The launch of additional satellites will provide global coverage of the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Ocean regions and thus a possibility to establish international, national and regional networks.

Intersputnik is confident that Lockheed Martin's extensive satellite, launch and ground system capabilities, combined with the long experience of Intersputnik as a provider of satellite services, will allow this new company to provide state-of-the-art solutions to our customers' communications needs, thus contributing to the development of multilateral cooperation in international telecommunications. By forming an alliance with one of the largest global manufacturers of satellite technologies, Intersputnik welcomes the approach of the twenty-first century with confidence.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your presentation. I have no further names on the list of speakers; if anyone does wish to speak I would ask them to give their names to the Secretariat.

I will shortly adjourn this meeting of the Committee. Before doing so, I would like to remind delegations that this afternoon we will continue our consideration of agenda item 5, "General exchange of views" and, time permitting, we will begin our consideration of agenda item 6, "Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes". The meeting is now adjourned.

The sitting adjourned at 12.50 p.m.